

Courtesan and wife - destroyer and bestower

An analysis of the duality of the concept of femaleness in

The Daśakumāracarita



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Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages
University of Oslo

Grethe Lindgren
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Summary

The concept of femaleness in ancient India can be inferred from a variety of literary sources. The patriarchal-structured society has created normative texts, law books and treatises to explain female nature and to regulate female behavior. The duality in the perception of femaleness is often present within one single text, however, it becomes even clearer when different texts are compared and analysed. The dichotomy in the concept of femaleness is most obvious in the depiction of the two archetypes in Sanskrit literature: the wife and courtesan.

In the thesis, the *Daśakumāracarita*, which is a novel dated to the late 6th century AD, is read as a text that mirrors the society of the author. The text has been analysed and compared to other texts for the purpose of throwing light on how femaleness is perceived. The method used in this thesis is thus mainly hermeneutic. Because the aim is to reveal information about woman, and also because the male text studied in the analysis may ascribe to a viewpoint of women that primarily serves male goals, the approach is feminist.

The analysis is structured around three topics; female nature, the wife, and the courtesan. It reveals the basis for various beliefs and attitudes regarding femaleness, as well as ways patriarchy has employed these attitudes to advance male needs. Although the social spheres of the wife and the courtesan were mutually exclusive, their common objectives were to serve men. The analysis shows to what extent the women portrayed in the novel conform to the role models provided for them, and their options for power over their lives.

Female nature is presented as predominantly negative in the normative texts explored in this thesis. It was therefore important for patriarchy to control women, and in particular female sexuality, in order to protect itself from the possible malevolent effects of female behaviour. Marriage was a way to transform the negative traits in women into positive qualities. The wife became a benevolent force due to male control. The courtesan, on the other hand, was beyond male control, and is thus potentially dangerous. The patriarchal dilemma lies in the fact that it needed both types of women.

The front illustration is a photo of one side of a double-faced relief depicting a courtesan. Kushan Period. 2nd century AD. Maholi Village, Mathura. National Museum, New Delhi. American Institute of Indian Studies photograph.

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1 Background

1.1 The twofold concept of femaleness

What is femaleness? Or rather, how is femaleness conceptualised in classical Sanskrit literature? On the one hand, women are depicted as fertile, faithful, gracious and virtuous bestowers of happiness and comfort, often compared to the benevolent goddess Lakṣmī; on the other, women are aggressive, cunning, greedy, lustful and malevolent creatures that are able to destroy men. Both women and goddesses reflect these contradictory characteristics of the female.

There are two facets of femaleness, which might explain why women are conceived as either benevolent or malevolent: firstly, the female is associated with *śakti* (energy or power), which is the energizing principle of creation, and secondly with *prakṛti* (nature) or the undifferentiated matter of the universe.¹ *Prakṛti* also denotes matter as opposed to spirit; the prototype of the female sex: identified with *māyā* (illusion).² Females are said to be the embodiment of *śakti*. However, both men and women have this energy; it can even be increased or decreased depending upon one's actions. A woman, for example, can increase her *śakti* by being a *pativrata*: a devoted and virtuous wife. In the *Daśakumāracarita* (DKC) women are referred to as *pativrata* on two occasions. The implication of being a *pativrata* will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.3 and 4.1.

As being *prakṛti*, the active female counterpart of the Supreme Being (*puruṣa*, the inactive male aspect), women are commonly referred to as the field or the earth.³ The Law Code of Manu states: “³³Tradition holds that the woman represents the field, and the man the seed; all embodied beings spring from the union of field and seed.”⁴ Conception of a child is seen as the unity of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, where the male contributes the hard substances: the structured parts of the child, while the female contributes the soft substances or the unstructured parts. Wadley argues that: “The hard substance (seed) is structure (culture?) as opposed to the soft substances which is non-structure (Nature?).”⁵ This implies that women

¹ Jacobson, Doranne and Susan S. Wadley, *Women in India, Two Perspectives*, (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1999), 112.

² Dowson, John, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion: Geography, History and Literature*, (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., 1998), 249.

³ Jacobson and Wadley, *Women in India, Two Perspectives*, 113.

⁴ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law, A Critical Edition and Translation of the Mānava-Dharmāsāstra*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), (9.33), 191.

⁵ Jacobson and Wadley, *Women in India, Two Perspectives*, 114.

are more Nature, or uncultured, than men. In the DKC there are frequent references to women as manifestations of the Earth, and also vice versa; the Earth is compared to a beautiful young woman. I will discuss this connectedness in chapter 3.2.

Being energy or power and uncultured, the female represents uncultured power, which is potentially dangerous. On the other hand, she can also use her uncultured power for the benefit of others. Furthermore, being the receptor of man's seed, she is fertile and represents growth and prosperity. Jacobson holds that the paradox is that even if sexuality is a prerequisite for pregnancy and childbirth, it is as sexual beings that women invoke fear and contempt, and that it is part of the Brahman tradition to view women as being dangerously seductive and lacking in self-control.⁶ This is confirmed by the *Mānava-Dharmāsāstra* (The Law Code of Manu), which warns men against the presence of tempting young women, as in: “²¹³It is the very nature of women here to corrupt men”.⁷

What further complicates the situation is that it is also as sexual beings that women are praised and respected. The cultivated courtesan was both indispensable and celebrated because she was keeper of and contributor to the artistic, cultural, and sensual life in ancient India. I will discuss the courtesan in more detail in chapter 5.

Wadley refers to studies which show that good females, whether they are goddess or human, are controlled by males: that is, Culture controls Nature.⁸ Thus, it is vital for men to keep women and female sexuality under their control to ensure that it is the woman's inherent capacity for being benevolent that is achieved.

The Law Code of Manu makes it very clear that women must be controlled throughout their lives. He states:

¹⁴⁷ Even in their own homes, a female—whether she is a child, a young woman, or an old lady—should never carry out any task independently. ¹⁴⁸ As a child, she must remain under her father's control; as a young woman, under her husband's; and when her husband is dead, under her sons'. She must never seek to live independently.⁹

Even though Olivelle warns the readers of The Law Code of Manu against taking the statements as literally true, because legal literature hyperbole is a literary device, he holds that

⁶ Jacobson and Wadley, *Women in India, Two Perspectives*, 59.

⁷ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (2.213), 105.

⁸ Jacobson and Wadley, *Women in India, Two Perspectives*, 114-115.

⁹ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (5.147-148), 146.

the law relates to ongoing practice. The *śāstra* is “both a repository of received knowledge and a tool of instruction”.¹⁰

There are, however, women who seem to be beyond male control. The *gaṇikās* (courtesans) normally do not marry, and their sexuality is used according to their own will to obtain economic independence and autonomy. When studying courtesans, one has to bear in mind that the groups of women who make a living from their bodies are manifold and varied. In Yaśodhara’s Jayamaṅgalā, a commentary on Kāmasūtra, nine types of prostitutes are listed:

kumbhadāsī (slave woman, harlot)

paricārikā (servant, female attendant)

kūlaṭā (unchaste woman)

svairiṇī (sexually promiscuous woman)

naṭī (dancing girl, actress)

śilpakārikā (female artisan)

prakāśavinaṣṭā (woman who leaves her family to become someone’s mistress)

rūpājīvā (woman who lives by her beauty)

gaṇikā (courtesan).¹¹

Ludwig Sternbach states that in Sanskrit literature the word *gaṇikā* is often used to denote prostitutes.¹² The same holds for the word *veśyā*. In the DKC, *gaṇikā* is the word most frequently used to refer to courtesans, followed by *veśa/veśyā*, *vārā* and *bandhakī*. The word *rūpājīvā* is used only once. All these words bear different connotations, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

Further, Amarasiṃha explains that: “A prostitute [*veśyā*], who is endowed with good character, beauty, and good qualities and distinguishes herself in them, receives the title of a *gaṇikā* and a high position among the people.”¹³ In the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyaṇa, and the Jātakas the word *gaṇikā* is used to denote a person of high esteem. In Kauṭilya’s Arthaśāstra (Arthaśāstra) the word *gaṇikā* is used of prostitutes who are employed as government servants

¹⁰ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, 35 and 64.

¹¹ Shah, Shalini, “In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries”, in *The Medieval History Journal*, Vol. 5, No 1, (2002), 122.

¹² Sternbach, Ludwig, “Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya’s Arthaśāstra”, in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 71, No 1, (Jan.-Mar., 1951), 25.

¹³ Amarasiṃha quoted in Sternbach, “Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya’s Arthaśāstra”, 26.

and who receive payment for their services from the king's treasury. According to the same source, the *rūpājīvā*, on the contrary, had to pay a monthly tax to the government from her earnings. Further, the *gaṇikā*, like the daughters of the king and the king's high officials, was expected to master the sixty-four arts, which include singing, dancing, cooking, gambling, architecture, grammar, the science of strategy, and lovemaking.¹⁴ In chapter VI in the DKC we are explicitly told that the young courtesan Chandrasenā is brought up together with a princess in the king's harem, and that the courtesan's mother and the queen met for conversations. It is obvious from the text that all of the courtesans depicted in the DKC are of the highest rank of courtesans.

According to these sources, the courtesan was a highly educated and respected woman. At the same time, being a prostitute, her sexuality was "non-marital and non-procreative, and hence dangerous."¹⁵

1.2 Patriarchy – the overarching social system

The study of the concept of femaleness must be done within the context of the dominating patriarchy in which these concepts are formed and maintained. The patriarchal social order tends to place men on top of the social hierarchy while women are placed at the bottom. In ancient India, however, where the class distinguishing system of *varṇa* (colour) prevailed, social standing was probably more complex. The *varṇas* consisted of four classes, with the *brāhmaṇa* (priest) highest in the hierarchy followed by the *kṣatriya* (warrior), the *vaiśya* (peasant), and at the bottom the *sūdra* (servant).

How do women fit into this hierarchy? Is it reasonable to believe that a *brāhmaṇī* (Brahmin woman) was placed lower in the social hierarchy than a *sūdra*? It is difficult to make a firm statement about this problem, but according to early law books, the price set upon a woman's life, regardless of her class, was equal to that of a *sūdra* (male).¹⁶ Further, The Law Code of Manu states that killing a woman, whether she is a *sūdra*, a *vaiśya*, or a *kṣatriya*, is a secondary sin on the same level as stealing grains and base metals. Likewise, the punishment for killing an unchaste woman belonging to any of the four classes was to give a leather bag, a bow, a goat, and a sheep, respectively. For comparison, the punishment for

¹⁴ Sternbach, Ludwig, "Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra", 27-29.

¹⁵ Shah, Shalini, "In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries", 124.

¹⁶ Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, 3rd ed., (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 1967), 177.

killing a *śūdra* was to perform strict observance for six months, or to give ten white cows and a bull to a *brāhmaṇa*.¹⁷ The law books thus indicate that a woman, regardless of her class, tends to be regarded in general even lower than a *śūdra* (male).

Likewise, in the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna in the Royal Science: *mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpayonayaḥ | striyo vaiśyāstathā śūdrāste 'pi yānti parām gatim*, “For even those of lowly origin, son of Pritha, such as women, traders, peasants, and servants, reach the highest state when they take refuge in me.”¹⁸ This verse places women, regardless of their caste affiliation, on a level with *śūdras*. What is strange in this verse is that *vaiśyas* are listed among people of low origin. The *vaiśya* caste is, according to The Law Code of Manu, regarded as one of the upper classes and entitled to Vedic studies (see below).

Patriarchy can be defined as the social arrangement where men possess structural power by monopolising positions of high status in important social, economical, legal, and religious institutions.¹⁹ Judging from The Law Code of Manu, in the ancient Indian society this monopolising was sanctioned by the *upanayana* or initiation rites by which a boy became a full member of his class and of society. During the *upanayana* ceremony, the boy was invested with the sacred thread, symbolising his second or spiritual birth, which qualified him to learn the Vedas by heart. The initiation was confined to boys of the three upper classes, while *śūdras* and women were excluded from Vedic studies. The Law Code of Manu states that a man “is equal to a Śūdra until he is born from the Veda.”²⁰ Being excluded from initiation into Vedic knowledge, women are implicitly placed on a level with the servant class. The importance of Vedic studies is confirmed in the Bhagavad Gita, where Lord Kṛṣṇa lists Vedic studies among the qualities of those born to divine fortune.²¹ The Law Code of Manu further states that: “⁶⁷For females...the marriage ceremony equals the rite of Vedic consecration; serving the husband equals living with the teacher; and care of the house equals the tending of the sacred fires.”²² Again, the emphasis on service links women as a group to the lowest of the four classes.

¹⁷ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (11.67) 218, (11.131) 222.

¹⁸ Fosse, Lars Martin, *The Bhagavad Gita*, The Original Sanskrit and An English Translation (by) Lars Martin Fosse, (Woodstock: YogaVidya.com, 2007), 91.

¹⁹ Glick, Peter and Susan T. Fiske. *Revisioning Gender*. Editors Myra M. Ferree, Judith Lorber and Beth B. Hess, (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2000), 373.

²⁰ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (2.172), 103.

²¹ Fosse, Lars Martin, *The Bhagavad Gita*, 143.

²² Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (2.67), 98.

The terms denoting the nine types of prostitutes listed in the Kāmasūtra are all gendered or gender-specific. There are no references to male prostitution, either in the Kāmasūtra or in any of the other sources referred to in this thesis. It is interesting that a word like *śilpakārikā* is used to denote a prostitute. In Monier-Williams dictionary this word is translated as “a female artisan”²³ only; no secondary meaning pertaining to prostitution is added. In Chakladar’s studies in the Kāmasūtra, *śilpakārikā* is translated as “a woman practising the arts”.²⁴ K.R. Iyengar, however, in his translation of the Kāmasūtra states that a *śilpakārikā* is a woman who apparently is engaged in some handicraft, but secretly engages in prostitution.²⁵ The fact that craftsmen (and women) belonged to the *śūdra* class may explain why women workers were included in the list of categories of prostitutes. Shah argues that this certainly “reinforce the view that under patriarchy, in historical time, it was not possible for women to enter any profession or work for wages and thereby earn a livelihood, and at the same time maintain the integrity of her body”.²⁶ It might be argued that this is an overstatement as Arthaśāstra mentions work available to women in the manufacture of textiles. Women, particularly those without support, as widows, crippled women, girls, ascetic women, *devadāsīs* who no longer attended the temples for service, and old or ill prostitutes could earn a modest salary from spinning yarn from wool, bark-fibre, cotton, hemp and flax in the king’s factories. Women from respectable families, however, were allowed to spin in their homes.²⁷ The connection between women who left the house on their own, thus being outside the control of male relatives, and disreputableness seems obvious.

1.3 A feminist approach

My objective is to shed light on the question of why women are extolled and despised, loved and feared, and what kind of mechanisms patriarchy used to deal with this duality in ancient times. I will start by exploring how female nature is understood and expressed in The Law Code of Manu, which provides laws, rules, and codes of conduct applicable to all people, as

²³ Monier-Williams, Monier, *A Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1997), 1073.

²⁴ Chakladar, Haran Chandra, *Social life in ancient India: studies in the Vātsyāyana’s Kāmasutra*, (Calcutta: Greater Indian Society, 1929), 104.

²⁵ Rangaswami Iyengar, K, *The Kāma-sūtra (or the science of love) of Sri Vātsyāyana*, (Lahore: The Punjab Sanskrit Book Depot, 1921), 219.

²⁶ Shah, Shalini, “In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries”, 122.

²⁷ Kangle, R. P, *The Kauṭīlīya Arthaśāstra, part III by Kauṭīlīya*, (Bombay: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1965), 184.

well as communities and nations. As a normative text, The Law Code of Manu also sets up rules for female behaviour and for how women are to be perceived and treated.

Next, I will look closely at the wife/courtesan dichotomy. First, I will look at the position of the wife: the pure, uneducated, and sexually controlled woman. How is she supposed to behave according to The Law Code of Manu and to Kāmasūtra, the text on erotic love? How is she protected according to Arthaśāstra, the text on policy? Moreover, what is her option of power over her life? Then, I will inquire into the status of the courtesan: the attractive, educated, and sexually promiscuous woman. How is she conceived and how is her life regulated according to the sources mentioned above, and to what extent is she in control of her own life and her sexuality? These questions will be discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5.

For the analysis of the dual concept of femaleness, my point of departure is the DKC, which I have chosen to read as a novel that mirrors the society at the time of the author: around the sixth century AD. Elliot Oring claims that a story, whether it is a myth, legend, or a tale, always reflects both the narrator and the values and attitudes of his surroundings. A tale is in a way “a stage upon which active sociocultural forces are externalized, examined, manipulated, and played out.”²⁸ The grounds for this claim are that narrations are performed in specific social contexts and depend on a certain measure of community acceptance.

The view that the DKC can be taken as a source of socio-historical knowledge is supported by both N. Q. Pankaj and Daud Ali (see chap. 2.4). Although one can never know how an historical text originally appeared to its contemporaries, it is commonly believed that the novel was written for entertainment at the king’s court and therefore employs exaggeration and parody to amuse and surprise. Nevertheless, it portrays people from all classes in a realistic way, as both rulers and common people display good qualities as well as human failings.

The analysis is based on 65 sentences picked from the text, which in one way or the other can be interpreted as carrying information about female nature, the wife, and the courtesan. Are the women portrayed in the novel conforming to the role models provided for them or not? If they do, how is that shown? And if not, in what way do they deviate from the norms and how should that be interpreted?

²⁸ Oring, Elliot, *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, An Introduction, (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1986), 136.

A feminist approach to the study of femaleness is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, because it will reveal information about women's lives from a female perspective, and secondly, because male texts may attribute to women points of view that primarily serve male goals. My analysis will show whether the subordination of women's interests to those of men, so obviously promoted in The Law Code of Manu, also pervades the DKC. In the patriarchal society of ancient India, men generally had considerable power over women. In The History of Sexuality, the French philosopher Michel Foucault discusses the connection between gender and power. He argues that where there is power, there will also be resistance. The resistance may not be a verbalised protest against what is perceived as power or dominance; it may well be a subtle and disguised way of manipulating events to one's own benefit.²⁹ In the DKC there are several instances where women find ways to communicate their feelings with clever and covert gestures, and thereby incite men to take the necessary actions to fulfil their desires. I believe that the DKC contains more information on how women adapt to, and take advantage of the prevailing social system than what can be perceived by a superficial reading of the text. I hope my analysis will show that this is the case.

Finally, gender roles and women's subordinate positions are often sanctioned in religion, as the salvation and happiness of women are dependent on their virtues and chastity as wives, daughters, and widows.³⁰ The premises that underlie the idealisation of women, as is the case with the *pativrata*, always advance male interest. When analysing the rules and regulations concerning women, I will be sensitive to whom these prescriptions benefit.

1.4 Method

1.4.1 Understanding the text

An object of interest can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Hermeneutic thinkers, such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, argue that there is no single way to interpret a text. Gadamer holds that all kinds of understanding are prejudicial; we always interpret and make judgments on the basis of what we already know.³¹ Interpretation makes use of values and notions that are personal and cultural, and interpreters with different backgrounds, knowledge and motivations

²⁹ Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge vol. 1*, Translated by Robert Hurley, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1998), 95-96.

³⁰ Jacobson and Wadley, *Women in India, Two Perspectives*, 118

³¹ Lawn, Chris, *Gadamer A guide for the Perplexed*, (London: CONTINUUM International, 2006), 38

will thus read different meanings into the same text. Therefore, an unlimited number of equally valid interpretations are possible.

Critical pluralism is opposed by critical monism, which holds that there is ideally only one correct interpretation of a given text. Vandavelde argues that these two positions do not represent a dichotomy; on the contrary they address two different aspects of interpretation. He calls these two aspects “event” and “act”. “Event” he explains as the tradition in which the interpretation takes place, a tradition that is influenced by concepts, values, and habits. “Act”, on the other hand, is the act of consciousness: the interpreter’s commitment to the truth of the text, his or her truthfulness, and rightness of what is said. If prompted, the interpreter must be ready to defend his or her interpretation.³²

Being a woman, and brought up and educated in the West, I must be aware of my own prejudices. In ancient India, polygamy among royals and people of the upper *varṇas* was common, courtesans were a natural part of the royal court, marriages were contracted by the head of the family, and male supremacy was generally not questioned. As hermeneutics strive to understand what is said by looking at the context in which it is said, I am particularly aware of avoiding anachronism. While taking a feminist approach, I will strive not to read egalitarian ideas into utterances made by women. I will, however, be sensitive to women’s voices, and try to extract as much information about female situations as possible. When studying the DKC, which to a large extent describes city life and the adventures and circumstances of royals and people connected to the court, I am aware that my conclusions must be limited to this social stratum of society.

1.4.2 Problems in interpretation

One thing to consider when analyzing elements of an ancient book is intention. What was Daṇḍin’s intention when he wrote the DKC? Or more specifically, what was his intention with the way he presents the different characters in the book? As a court poet, most certainly one of his intentions must have been to entertain the king and his court. But he could have had other intentions as well. Did he write the different stories to inform the king about life and attitudes on all levels of his kingdom, or was his aim to warn him against the clever and calculating behaviour of those close to him? Robert DeCaroli interprets Daṇḍin’s intention,

³² Vandavelde, *The Task of the Interpreter*, 1-4

when he was writing the Viśruta tale, as a warning against neglecting the study of political science (see chap. 2.4.3).

Different theorists have conceptualized the author's intention in different ways. E. D. Hirsch holds that the verbal meaning of a text corresponds with the author's intention.³³ Roland Barthes disagrees with the notion of an author's authoritative voice that speaks over and above the text, and which guides the interpretation of what the text says. He sees the relationship between the author and the text as the relationship between a father and his child; the author exists *before* the text, and he nourishes the text. Barthes introduces the term "scriptor", which is a co-creator and born *at the same time* as the text. The scriptor is "what a reader configures when reading"³⁴; it is a mixture between writer and reader in the sense that it combines the pre-existing text in new ways. Thus, according to Barthes, "a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination"³⁵, and "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author."³⁶ Michel Foucault, taking the same position as Barthes on the author's authority, clarifies that the notion of author depends on culture and period:

The author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition [sic] of fiction.³⁷

In this way, a text speaks differently to different readers, depending on time and cultural background. My analysis of the text is not so much concerned with Daṇḍin's intention, as with what he actually reveals about his contemporary society. What kind of information can be drawn explicitly from the text, and what is given implicitly? What is confirmed by other sources and what is not?

1.4.3 Analysing the text

In the investigation of the text, I will apply elements taken both from structuralism and from the method of narrative analysis. The structural analysis starts with focusing on a limited number of elements of the text, and based on these elements I hope to be able to see a structure that can yield information about the phenomena I am interested in: the dual concept

³³ Vandavelde, *The Task of the Interpreter*, 9.

³⁴ Vandavelde, *The Task of the Interpreter*, 63.

³⁵ Barthes quoted in Vandavelde, *The Task of the Interpreter*, 64.

³⁶ Barthes quoted in Vandavelde, *The Task of the Interpreter*, 64.

³⁷ Foucault quoted in Vandavelde, *The Task of the Interpreter*, 64.

of femaleness. My analysis is based on 65 sentences, which are sorted according to theme: female nature, the wife and the courtesan. A list of the sentences in chronological order is provided as an appendix. By dividing the sentences in this way motives and patterns become clear, and it is easier to see the underlying tendencies in the text.

Many of the sentences I have chosen for the analysis contain utterances made by different characters. Mieke Bal defines characters as anthropomorphic figures with distinctive characteristics resembling real people.³⁸ She argues that the classical distinction between round and flat characters is applicable only to psychological narratives. Other genres, such as fairy tales and other fictions, which mock such categories, are thus excluded from categorisation such as this because all their characters are “flat”. This is also the case with the DKC. Many the characters in the book seem to be rather stereotyped figures. “The clever courtesan”, “the faithful wife”, “the brave hero” and “the austere ascetic” are all examples of characters that conform to a standard and are thus considered predictable in behaviour and attributes. These characters normally behave according to conventions, but as we will see, sometimes they do not. I will argue that in both cases the characters may give information that is valuable for my analysis. When they behave as expected, they confirm attitudes and conditions for which one blames the patriarchal society, and when they behave in ways that deviate from the norm they may unfold new perspectives.

In addition, Sanskrit narrative literature tends to construct complex archetypes. In contrast to a stereotype, which denotes a standardisation, the significance of an archetype lies in symbolisation. Two main archetypes which will be explored in my analysis are the *courtesan* and the *wife*.

Another element in my analysis is that of focalization. Bal defines focalization as the relation between the vision, or the one who sees, and that which is seen.³⁹ Whenever events are presented, they are inevitably presented from a certain angle, or vision. The focalizer is thus the point from which the elements in the text are seen. Since the focalizer often is one of the characters that participate in the tale, the vision might be limited and one-sided. The analysis must thus take into account who the focalizer is, because the image the focalizer gives of the focalized object is determined by the focalizer, and may thus have a strongly manipulative effect. On the other hand, the way the focalizer presents an object also gives

³⁸ Bal, Mieke, *Narratology, Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 2nd edition, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 114,115.

³⁹ Bal, Mieke, *Narratology, Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 142.

information about the focalizer itself. Focalization may also be external, and thus appear to be more objective than what is the case with a characterbound focalizer. A hermeneutic approach is valuable here. In cases where visions are presented by an external focalizer, it is important to recognise that there is no such thing as objectivity.

2 The Daśakumāracarita

2.1 Daṇḍin – the Court Poet

Daṇḍin is believed to have lived in the late 6th and early 7th centuries. He is said to have been orphaned when still a boy, and he was driven into exile when his hometown was besieged by enemies. After wandering from place to place for twelve years, he returned to Kāñchī, when peace was restored.⁴⁰ There he flourished as a court poet of the Pallava kings. Kale argues that from the reading of his works, Daṇḍin almost certainly was a *dākṣiṇātya* (coming from the south or Deccan) probably from the Vidarbha country. This statement is backed up by the story of Gominī, in the chapter about Mitragupta's adventures. According to Kale, the very detailed descriptions of economic housekeeping in this story, which can be found in South India even today, could only have been written by someone thoroughly familiar with the habits of people in this area. Daṇḍin's realistic and intimate descriptions of royal palaces, wealthy courtesans, and worldly pleasure, indicates that he must have lived in prosperous circumstances. Further, his description of gambling, thieves, murder, abduction, illicit love, and dangerous journeys, show that he also had knowledge of life's darker sides. From the detailed references to the science of politics and the many erotic hints and details, it seems obvious that Daṇḍin was well read in both Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra and the Kāmasūtra of Vatsyāyana.⁴¹

Other works ascribed to Daṇḍin are Kāvyaḍarśa, a manual of Sanskrit poetic theory, defining the ideals of style and sentiment to each genre of *kāvya* (courtly poetry), and the fragmentary romance Avantisundarīkathā.⁴²

⁴⁰ Daṇḍin, *What Ten Young Men Did*, translated by Isabelle Onians, (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 25.

⁴¹ Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, xv-xxii.

⁴² Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, ix and xvii.

2.2 The *kāvya* genre

Kāvya is an ornate and highly artificial literary style used in court poetry. The many textbooks on the techniques of poetry, among them Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaadarśa*, usually describe the purpose of poetry as emotive. The aesthetic sensation experienced by the listener should rise from eight basic *rasas* (flavours): *śṛṅgāra* (love), *vīrya* (courage), *bībhatsa* (loathing), *raudra* (anger), *hāsyā* (mirth), *bhayānaka* (terror), *karuṇa* (pity), and *adbhuta* (surprise). Every poem should contain at least one of these *rasas*.

Words have their primary meaning, or denotations, and their undertones, or connotations. A skilled poet would choose words to imply meaning far beyond the bare meaning of the words, and would thus be able to induce a range of emotions in just a few lines. In addition, the poet had to master *alaṃkāra* (ornamentation), including the simile, metaphor, punning, alliteration, and generalization. The extraordinary number of synonyms and homonyms in Sanskrit, in addition to numerous stock epithets, like *acala* (immovable) for mountain and *abalā* ("weakling") for woman enabled the poet to produce florid and elaborate poems. More often than not, the *kāvya* also employed varied and complicated meters.⁴³

Daṇḍin displays his mastery of the *kāvya* style in the ornate, imaginative and amusing *Daśakumāracarita*, which contains all of the eight *rasas*, is rich in double meaning and stock epithets, and packed with all the different elements of *alaṃkāra*. As an example of his abilities, in the narrative of Mantragupta, who has injured his lips by excessive kissing, Daṇḍin produces a *sthānanīyama* (lipogram) that requires the exclusion of one or more letters of the alphabet, in this case the labials *m*, *p*, and *b*.⁴⁴ This is a true tour de force.

2.3 The tale

The *Daśakumāracarita* is a collection of exciting stories, held together by the framework of a boxing narrative. Onians compares the text to the modern genre known as *Bildungsroman*, or a novel of formation.⁴⁵ In such a genre, the author usually presents the moral and social shaping of a young protagonist. The text can also be compared to a picaresque novel, which is a story of a likeable, witty, but dishonest hero who moves about without destination and has a

⁴³ Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, 3rd ed., 416-417.

⁴⁴ Daṇḍin, *What Ten Young Men Did*, translated by Isabelle Onians, 21.

⁴⁵ Daṇḍin, *What Ten Young Men Did*, 15.

great many exciting adventures.⁴⁶ It has been described as “a prose romance with a blending of an *ākhyāyikā* and a *katha* [sic]”⁴⁷, a notion to which Daṇḍin himself probably would object. In his *Kāvyaḍarśa* he holds that *kāvya* and *ākhyāyikā* (a short narrative) are indistinguishable, and “but two names for the same species of composition”.⁴⁸

The plot is this: King Rājahaṃsa has lost his kingdom in battle with enemies, and lives in exile in the jungle together with his queen and his court. Here his son Rājavāhana is born. A sage has predicted that in the future the prince will win back the kingdom that his father has lost. The prince is brought up together with nine other boys, five of them foundlings. When the boys come of age they are sent out to conquer the world. Shortly after the onset of their journey, they are separated, and the ten youngsters wander off, one by one, in various directions. By employing their great skills, gained from broad education and training, they succeed in their mission to restore the lost kingdom. In the course of their wanderings, each of the ten youths meets with great challenges, encounters numerous kings, falls in love with princesses and courtesans, marries and finally gains royal status. When they finally reunite, each young man narrates his own adventures. The tale is humorous, sometimes amoral, and rich in the details of social life on all levels. A more detailed summary of the plot is supplied as an appendix.

2.4 Former studies of the text

Our understanding of a text is to a great extent influenced by earlier interpretations and the scholarship that has developed around that text.⁴⁹ Discussions and debates on earlier works accumulate to become part of our tradition that, according to Gadamer, constitutes the background for our engagement with the text.⁵⁰

2.4.1 Daśakumāracarita – a cultural study

N. Q. Pankaj studied the *Daśakumāracarita* in order to extract knowledge of the traditional culture of ancient India. She interprets the text to reflect the realities of society at the time

⁴⁶ *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*, (London: HarperCollins Publisher, 1992), 1078.

⁴⁷ Pankaj, N.Q., *Daśakumāracarita a Cultural Study*, (Varanasi: Kala Parakashan, 2002), ii. *Katha* is a misspelling of *kathā*.

⁴⁸ Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, vi.

⁴⁹ DeCaroli, Robert, “An Analysis of Daṇḍin’s *Daśakumāracarita* and Its Implications for Both the Vākāṭaka and Pallava Courts”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 115, No. 4 (Oct. – Dec., 1995), 671.

⁵⁰ Lawn, Chris, *Gadamer A guide for the Perplexed*, 65.

when Daṇḍin's wrote the tale. Even though critics argue that Daṇḍin exaggerated aspects of political, religious, and social life, Pankaj holds that Daṇḍin's realistic approach to people and events reflects the general trends of contemporary society. My approach to the text is based on the same assumption. What is important, though, is to distinguish between when Daṇḍin employs literary conventions in his writing and when he describes people and situations as they really are.

Pankaj presents various aspects of Daṇḍin's observations ranging from geographical data, policy and governance, art and architecture, religion and philosophy, to social and economic life.⁵¹

2.4.2 The Daśakumāracarita as an informant on courtly culture

Daud Ali, who has studied courtly culture and political life in early medieval India, refers to the DKC as confirming the customary courtesies between people of rank. Like Pankaj, he sees the text as giving reliable information about customs and attitudes during the time of Daṇḍin. Among other points, he refers to the episode where princess Avantisundarī meets Rājavāhana, disguised as a Brahmin. The princess offers him a seat and honours him, while her attendants present him various gifts, such as flowers and perfume. This custom of honouring a guest is also found in other sources.

He states further that gestures of greeting, like the one with folded hands pressed to touch the head, found in other sources as the Harṣacarita, are confirmed in the DKC.

Ali argues that people who participated in the detailed rituals of courtship understood the outward signs of attraction and repulsion. In the DKC, princess Avantisundarī's female companion, Bālachandrikā, notices at once the mutual attraction between Avantisundarī and Rājavāhana due to her *bhāvaviveka* (discrimination of dispositions), which made clear to her what was on the mind of the couple.

The court was known as a social relationship of men of taste, but also as a place of pretence and deception. Ali states that many medieval sayings deemed the courtly relationship between the lord and the dependant as one of deceit. In the DKC chapter VIII, the king's

⁵¹ Pankaj, N.Q., *Daśakumāracarita a Cultural Study*, (Varanasi: Kala Parakashan, 2002).

servant Vihārabhadra advises the king against the science of politics as it is a deception and not to be trusted.⁵²

2.4.3 The Daśakumāracarita's implications for the Vākāṭaka and Pallava Courts

It has been debated whether the Daśakumāracarita may contain a reliable record of the events surrounding the creation of the Ajanta caves in Mahārāṣṭra. Robert DeCaroli holds that there are social, political and literary evidence that support this view and he argues that the Viśruta tale contains reliable historical information about the fall of the Vākāṭaka dynasty. DeCaroli interprets this tale as containing a metaphor for the people and events of the Pallava court. He argues that for this metaphor to be effective, it must contain names known to be historically correct from the 5th century Vākāṭaka inscriptions. Daṇḍin, who himself had experienced the traumas of war, wanted to use this tale to caution the young Pallava king Narasimhavarman II against self-complacency. DeCaroli emphasises that a large portion of the Viśruta tale is engaged in the minister Vasurakṣita's instructive lecturing of the young king Anantavarman, who has neglected the study of political science.⁵³

2.5 Intertextuality

Classical Sanskrit narratives display a high level of intertextuality. A text will inevitably relate to other texts as long as they all draw on the same sources, be it the great Indian epics, the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana, or other commonly known sources. Moreover, in the DKC there are slight borrowings from earlier works. In Rājavāhana's story (*daśakumāracarita*⁵⁴, chap. I), an *apsaras* (divine nymph) mentions the *vidyādhara* Vīraśekhara, son of Mānasavega. She is alluding to a story in both the Kathāsaritsāgara and Bṛhatkathā, where Naravāhanadatta kills the *vidyādhara* Mānasavega for having seduced his wife.⁵⁵

The device of proving Nitambavatī a *sākinī* (female demon) and getting her thrown out of her house, seems to have been taken from the Vetālapañcaviṃśati in the Bṛhatkathā.

⁵² Daud, Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 121, 125, 197, 204.

⁵³ DeCaroli, Robert, "An Analysis of Daṇḍin's Daśakumāracarita and Its Implications for Both the Vākāṭaka and Pallava Courts", 671-678.

⁵⁴ *daśakumāracarita* refers to the part of the book that is considered Daṇḍin's own work.

⁵⁵ Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, [39]

Here prince Vajramukṭa's friend, Buddhīśārīra, uses this kind of device to bring the prince and his beloved Padmavatī together.⁵⁶ The difference is that in the Vetālapañcaviṃśati Padmavatī loves the prince, while Nitambavatī is framed by a scoundrel who is in love with her.

The story of Marīci and Kāmamañjarī in Apahāravarman's story (DKC, chap. VI) is an example of a common theme in Sanskrit literature: the seduction of the ascetic. The belief that irresistible power is produced by perfect asceticism, which includes sexual continence, is frequently found in Sanskrit texts. The ascetic, by observing chastity, is believed to accumulate the sexual power and thus become a reservoir of greatly valuable energy, which can be discharged in times of need.⁵⁷ The power accumulated in the ascetic can be so powerful that it even threatens to dethrone the gods. To prevent this from happening, Indra was known to send heavenly *apsarāses* (a class of female divinities, sometimes called nymphs) down to seduce the ascetic, and almost always the ascetic is fired with passion and forgets his chastity. A well-known tale containing this theme is the tale of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, which occurs in manifold variations: in the epics Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa, in the Padma and Skandapurāṇa, in the Alambusā Jātaka, the Naḷinikā Jātaka, and in the Nalinī Jātaka in Mahāvastu. Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, who lives in a hermitage together with his father, has never seen a woman. Because of his chastity, he accumulates so much power that he finally blocks Indra's ability to send rain. After a long period of drought, he is seduced by a courtesan or a princess, and as soon as he breaks his chastity, it starts to rain.⁵⁸ In the DKC Daṇḍin employs this theme in a different way. The temptress is not sent by Indra to block the ascetic's supernatural powers; she comes of her own will to win a bet with another courtesan on whether she is clever enough to conquer the great sage. However, the consequence is the same; the ascetic loses his powers.

⁵⁶ Warder, Anthony Kennedy, *Indian Kāvya Literature*, Volum VI, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1972), 129-130.

⁵⁷ Gonda, J, *Selected Studies*, Vol. IV, History of Ancient Indian Religion, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 238.

⁵⁸ Meyer, Johann Jakob, *Sexual Life in Ancient India*, A study in the comparative history of Indian culture, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 260, 540-541.

3 Female nature

3.1 Patriarchy – the defining authority

As earlier mentioned, the concept of femaleness is closely linked with patriarchy. Since ancient times the patriarchally organized society has defined women's place in society, their access to education, and their power to control their own lives. Religious texts and treatises on law, written and commented on by men, have had a wide and defining effect on social relations and the lives and conduct of women. In Vedic times, the general position of women would seem to be more satisfactory than what is later found to be the case. In the course of time, society became increasingly more rigid, and from about 500 BC, women's life became more restricted and homebound.⁵⁹ This is confirmed by Altekar. Up to about 200 BC, both girls and boys underwent the *upanayana* rite, which initiated them into Vedic studies, a prerequisite for religious status. As we have seen, The Law Code of Manu, composed about 200 BC, put an end to this practice, and thereby denied girls access to Vedic knowledge.

What further restricted women was the lowering of the marriage age. In the Vedic age girls married when they were sixteen or seventeen years old, but at about 500 BC, they were commonly married soon after they reached puberty.⁶⁰ The Yājñavalkya *smṛti*, written in the early first millennium AD, even condemns the guardian who fails to marry a girl *before* she reached puberty.⁶¹ This view seems to be in accordance with The Law Code of Manu: “⁸⁸When there is a suitor who is eminent, handsome and of equal status, one should give the girl to him according to the rules, even if she has not attained the proper age”.⁶² Olivelle states that most commentators on this verse take the proper age to mean that the girl has not reached the minimum age of eight years. He opposes this view and takes the proper age to be when the girl has reached puberty. However, that a girl might be married off when she was only eight years old is confirmed by a following verse: “⁹⁴A 30-year-old man should marry a charming girl of 12 years, or an 18-year-old, a girl of 8 years—sooner, if his fulfilling the Law would suffer”.⁶³ According to this verse, the husband might be nearly three times the age of the wife at the time of marriage.

⁵⁹ Bose, Mandakranta, *Faces of the Feminine in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern India*, viii, xii, 4.

⁶⁰ Altekar, A. S., *Education in Ancient India*, (Benares: Nand Kishore & Bros., 1944), 214-215.

⁶¹ Altekar, A. S., *Education in Ancient India*, (Benares: Nand Kishore & Bros., 1944), 216.

⁶² Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (9.88) 194.

⁶³ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (9.94) 194.

At the time when the DKC was written, the marriage age for girls was approximately twelve. This is confirmed by the text: Mañjuvādinī is about thirteen years old when she marries Viśruta, while Mañikarṇikā is only twelve years old when she is married to Arthapāla.⁶⁴

I will now look more closely into the text of the DKC to see what it reveals on women's nature. The 65 sentences that I have picked for my analysis are translated to reveal the meaning of the sentences, not to give a literal translation. I have, however, translated the sentences word-for-word and compared my translation with those of Kale and Onians. The notes in brackets under the Sanskrit text give reference to the sentence's place in the text: section, chapter (chap.), line, and page (p.).⁶⁵ In this way, a sentence marked (*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. I, line 4, p. 2) is taken from the first section of the book, chapter 1, line 4 on page 2. The *pūrvapīṭhikā* (beginning), which contains the first five chapters of the book, and *uttarapīṭhikā* (conclusion) are the paraphrased missing sections of Daṇḍin's original work. The *Daśakumāracarita* is Daṇḍin's own work, and consists of eight chapters.

3.2 Women linked to nature

As argued in the opening of this thesis, women can be perceived as more nature-related, or less cultured, than men. Ortner has elaborated on this idea and argues that every culture attempts to rise above and assert control over nature. This is done by means of thought and technology, and may take the form of ritual actions. In rituals, notions of purity and impurity are often central, and often these notions have to do with the relationship between culture and nature. Ortner states that it all begins with the body. The female body and its functions are more involved in reproduction than those of men. Menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing link a woman more closely to the renewing processes of nature, and thus "her animality is more manifest".⁶⁶ In addition, women are in general physically weaker than men, a fact that is reflected in a word denoting women: *abalā* (weak). It is women's physical

⁶⁴ Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, edited by M.R. Kale, (Bombay: Gopal Narayan & Co., 1925), 201, 136.

⁶⁵ The Sanskrit text is taken from Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*.

⁶⁶ Simone de Beauvoir quoted in Ortner, Shelly B, "Is Female to Male as Nature to Culture?" *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (1972), 13.

functions that motivate the view that she is closer to nature than men; a woman creates naturally from her own body, while men have to create artificially through cultural means.⁶⁷

It is a woman's bodily functions which make her fertile and able to bestow children, that put her in a state of impurity. This state of impurity may also be contagious. The Law Code of Manu confirms this notion, and states: “²³⁹A Cāṇḍāla, a pig, a cock, a dog, a menstruating woman, or a eunuch must not look at the Brahmins while they are eating”.⁶⁸ Furthermore “⁸⁵When someone touches a Divākīrti [probably a Cāṇḍāla], a menstruating woman, an outcast, a woman who have given birth, or a corpse—as also a person who has touched any of these—he is purified by bathing”.⁶⁹

The connection between women and nature can be seen several places in the DKC, particularly with regard to the king's consort.

1

*svarlokaśīkharoruruciraratnaratnākaravelāmekhalāvalayitadharaṇīramaṇīsaubhāgya
bhogabhāgyavān*
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. I, lines 4-6, p. 2)

His (the king's) was the good fortune to enjoy the beautiful young woman in the form of the earth, with the girdle in the form of the border of the ocean, which contains gems as large and beautiful as those on the peak of mount Meru.

The king's dominion over the land is compared to his dominion over his beloved. The comparison of the earth with a beautiful young woman implies that the land is fresh and fertile, and able to yield harvest, in the same way as a young woman is able to bestow children.

The king's ownership of land is contested by the Law Code of Manu, which states: “⁴⁴Even as those who know the past regard this earth as the wife of Pṛthu, so they say that a field belongs to the man who cleared the stumps and the deer to the man who owns the arrow.”⁷⁰ This verse must be seen in connection with the one that it immediately follows: “⁴³When someone shoots an arrow at the vitals of an animal that has already been pierced, his

⁶⁷ Ortner, Shelly B, “Is Female to Male as Nature to Culture?” *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (1972), 7-14.

⁶⁸ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (3.239) 120.

⁶⁹ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (5.85) 142.

⁷⁰ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (9.44) 192.

arrow is wasted; in like manner a seed is wasted when discharged in someone else's wife."⁷¹ Olivelle explains that these verses reinforce the notion that a virgin is the possession of the man who first deflowers her, implicitly understood to be her husband. He states that, "this is true with a virgin field as with a virgin girl".⁷² Therefore, since Pṛthu, the first king, cultivated the entire earth and took possession of it, no later king could claim it. Here too we see the link between woman and nature.

2

tasya vasumatī nāma sumatī līlāvatīkulaśekharamaṇī ramaṇī babhūva
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. I, line 8-9, p. 2)

His queen was Vasumatī, "The wealthy one" or "The Earth," wise and the crest jewel of the whole class of graceful women.

The queen's name, Vasumatī, is one of the epithets depicting the earth. This is another example of the association of women with nature. Further, Vasumatī's face is described as the moon, her arms as two lotus shoots, and her thighs as two plantain trunks.

3.3 Women's character

This is what The Law Code of Manu says about women's character:

¹⁴They pay no attention to beauty, they pay no heed to age; whether he is handsome or ugly, they make love to him with the single thought, "He's a man!" ¹⁵ Lechery, fickleness of mind, and hard-heartedness are innate in them; even when they are carefully guarded in this world, therefore, they become hostile towards their husbands. ¹⁶ Recognizing thus the nature produced in them at creation by Prajāpati, a man should make the utmost effort at guarding them. ¹⁷ Bed, seat, ornaments, lust, hatred, behaviour unworthy of an Ārya, malice, and bad conduct—Manu assigned these to women.⁷³

What The Law Code of Manu explicitly states in these verses is that Prajāpati, or The Lord of Creatures, has created women's nature this way. These are women's innate qualities, and the reason why men must be on guard. Concerning adultery, the Kāmasūtra offers a more moderate and egalitarian view: "⁸Gonikaputra says: 'A woman desires any attractive man she

⁷¹ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (9.43) 192.

⁷² Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, 325.

⁷³ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (9.14-17), 190.

sees, and, in the same way, a man desires a woman. But, after some consideration, the matter goes no farther' ”.⁷⁴ There are, however, remedies to these unwanted qualities that will be explored in chapter 4.

49

kiṃ krūraṃ strīhrdayaṃ

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 16, p. 156)

What is cruel? The heart of a woman.

The question was posed by a Brahmin demon that was threatening to eat Mitragupta. Mitragupta's answer is entirely in accordance with the verses from The Law Code of Manu cited above; women are cruel by their very nature. It must be noted, though, that Mitragupta is under the threat of being eaten and has to give an answer of which the demon will approve. The fact that the demon approves his answer indicates that the notion of woman's nature is valid both in the human and the demon realms.

51

bhartsitā'pi tena balātkāramarīramat

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 3, p. 158)

Although he repulsed her, she forcefully had her way (took her pleasure with him).

Mitragupta elaborated on female nature by relating the story about Dhūminī, who after having been rescued from death by her husband, tries to kill him and forces herself on a crippled man. Dhūminī exemplifies many of the qualities stated above; she is lewd, hard-hearted and hostile toward her own husband. She disregards that the stranger's hands, feet, ears and nose are amputated, when she commits adultery with him. She is unrestrained and indiscriminating in her sexual activity, and she is hard-hearted in that she tries to kill her husband. The story of Dhūminī may also serve as a warning to men against the possible

⁷⁴ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, A new, complete English translation of the Sanskrit text, (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2002), (5.1.8), 104.

consequences of neglecting the control of one's wife. Dhūminī's husband left her unguarded with the crippled man while he went out to hunt for food. Although narrated by Mitragupta, the focalization in this story is external. This gives an impression of objectivity in the description of Dhūminī's nature and adds to the feeling that the story actually describes how amoral women might be.

52

*taṃ ca vikalaṃ skandhenoduhyā deśāddeśāntaraṃ paribhramantī pativratāpratītiṃ
lebhe bahuvidhāśca pūjāḥ*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 6-7, p. 158)

Then carrying the cripple on her shoulders and wandering from place to place, she (Dhūminī) acquired a reputation as a *pativratā* (devoted and virtuous wife) and was worshipped in many ways.

Not only is Dhūminī hard-hearted and lustful, she is also cunning. She has feigned being a virtuous wife, and has falsely received admiration and devotion. A *pativratā* is the epitome of a perfect wife, who by her unconditional love for and service to her husband has reached a high spiritual state. This is in line with The Law Code of Manu, cited above in chapter 1.2, which states that serving the husband is to a woman as serving the guru is to a man.

In the Mahābhārata, Mārkaṇḍeya explains the glory of a *pativratā* to king Yudhiṣṭhira. Mārkaṇḍeya affirms that a faithful wife: “attains heaven by the obedience she brings to her husband.”⁷⁵ He relates a story about a *pativratā* who had obtained extrasensory perception by worshipping her husband as her deity and obeying him without discrimination. Myths such as this, probably well known to most people, contribute to the high esteem in which a virtuous wife is held.

However, in the end Dhūminī is exposed and punished. The king had her face disfigured and made her an outcast. The cripple she had been carrying around, on the other hand, is not held responsible for any misdeeds. Why had he not protested when Dhūminī

⁷⁵ Buitenen, J. A. B. van, *The Mahābhārata*, 2. *The book of the assembly hall*. 3. *The book of the forest*, Translated and edited by J. A. B. Buitenen, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 615.

undeservingly was admired and worshipped? That he had the power of speech is obvious from the fact that he revealed all the wickedness of Dhūminī when he was requested to. He is on the contrary characterised as a noble-minded man. Could the reason be that because he had benefitted from being carried and feed, he had taken advantage of her and suppressed his nobleness? Or, was he simply so dependent on her that he first revealed her wickedness when he felt safe and protected by someone else.

43

durabhirakṣatayā tu duhitṛṇāṃ muktaśaiśavānāṃ viśeṣataścāmātrkāṇāṃ
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. V, lines 14-15, p. 146)

It is difficult to control daughters who have passed childhood, and especially those that have no mother.

A Brahmin is asking the king to look after his alleged daughter while he summons her betrothed. He explicitly states that young daughters are hard to control. The same concern is expressed in the story of Arthapāla. Here the motherless princess Maṇikarṇikā is placed in an underground palace together with a large group of other woman in order to protect her from being corrupted by men.

As women are thought to be naturally libidinous, it is important to prevent a girl from finding a lover when she has passed puberty. If a girl lost her virginity it would be difficult, if not impossible, to get a husband for her. Without a husband, few choices were left to her. Whether she was to live as an unmarried woman with her parents, or be dismissed from her home to become a beggar or a prostitute, her parents would be disgraced.⁷⁶ As noted earlier, the Arthaśāstra offers another option for a woman without support: work in the king's factory. Such an occupation afforded a single woman a small income, but may prove harmful to her reputation since she normally would need to leave her house.

Consequently, strict control to prevent a girl from losing her virginity was recommended. The Law Code of Manu, which acknowledged the difficult task of controlling women, states: “¹²When they are kept confined within the house by trusted men, they are not

⁷⁶ Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, 167.

truly guarded; only when they guard themselves by themselves are they truly well guarded.”⁷⁷
A girl without a mother is thus particularly difficult to control. Moreover, without a mother, who has internalised the values of a *pativratā*, an important role model is missing.

60

*bhadra viruddhamivaitatpratibhāti | yataḥ kulajādurlabhaṃ vapuḥ ābhijātyaśaṃsinī
ca namratā*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 7-8, p. 167)

Good man, this seems to be a contradiction. For her (Nitambavatī's) physical beauty is rare among women of good family, and yet there is a modesty, which proclaims high birth.

The clever and ruthless Kalahakaṇṭaka has seen a painting of Nitambavatī, and is assessing her appearance. Why should beauty and modesty be contradictory qualities in a woman? One reason could be that beauty is never mentioned as one of the characteristics of a *kulastrī* (woman of good family, respectable or virtuous woman), while she is attributed qualities such as servitude, fidelity and modesty. Ideally, the looks of a *kulastrī* could not be assessed by strangers, because she should not to be seen in public places. She was guarded against the glances from men outside her own family, partly because her duties were centred on household chores, and partly because spending time outside the house was seen as one of the things that corrupt women.⁷⁸ Moreover, it was looked upon as indecent for men to look at a *kulastrī*. In the *Mṛcchakaṭikā*, a play by Śūdraka, dated to the second century AD, a male character cries out when he becomes aware of a woman in a carriage: “What ! A woman ? Let us pass away quickly by the road, with bent heads...for the eyes of me, to whom esteem in public assemblies is dear, are afraid to gaze upon highborn ladies.”⁷⁹ Kale comments on this line and makes it clear that a gentleman, with a sense of modesty and decorum, must not look at a strange woman's face.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (9.12), 190.

⁷⁸ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (9.13), 190.

⁷⁹ Kale, M. R., *The Mṛcchakaṭikā of Śūdraka*, Edited with the Commentary of Prithvidhara, Various Readings, A Literal English Translation, Notes, and an exhaustive Introduction, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999), 269.

⁸⁰ Kale, M. R., *The Mṛcchakaṭikā of Śūdraka*, 555.

Public women and women of lower breeding could move about more freely and were thus more subject to evaluations regarding their looks.

61

śramaṇikāmukhācca duṣkaraśilabhraṇśāṃ kulastriyamupalabhya...
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 3-4, p. 168)

The Buddhist nun explained that it is very difficult to make a woman of good family fall from her character...

This utterance could mean two things: either that a *kulastrī* has internalised the rules of proper conduct by having been brought up in a good family, or that, because of her high birth, she is guarded and protected from situations that might threaten her good repute.

62

...kim itarananārīsulabhaṃ cāpalaṃ sprṣṭaṃ na veti parīkṣā kṛtā
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 7-8, p. 168)

...testing you to find out whether or not you too are afflicted by the fickleness so common among other women. (Said by the nun to Nitambavatī)

As stated above, fickleness of mind, or unfaithfulness, is innate in women. The nun, who approached Nitambavatī on the scoundrel Kalahakaṇṭha's behalf, confirms by her utterance that what The Law Code of Manu says about women's nature is common knowledge.

64

raktatarā hi nastatra sakhyaśceṭyaśca | yathā na kaścidetajjñāsyati tathā yatiṣyante '
iti
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VII, lines 10-12, p. 175)

For there (in the ladies' quarters) my friends are totally attached to me. They will strive to make sure that no one shall know about this (that the prince is dwelling in the ladies' quarters).

Princess Kanakalekhā is assuring Mantragupta that it is safe for him to stay with her at her place. She takes an active role in smuggling the prince into her residence. How can she be so sure about her friends' loyalty? Is loyalty among the women in the harem an established practise? The Kāmasūtra states that the women of the harem are generally not satisfied, since they have to share only one husband. To remedy this situation, the women may send their female attendants out as messengers to the men they desire, and "they describe how easy it is to enter, the place where they can get out, the spaciousness of the building, the carelessness of the guards, and the irregularity of the entourage."⁸¹ For such a practise to be safe, the loyalty of the women in the harem is a must. Doniger regards this verse to be like a fairy-tale; a fantasy with no root in reality. What is interesting, though, is that the DKC recounts several instances where princes are invited into, or sneak into the women's quarters. It is thus tempting to infer that the author at least saw this as a theoretical possibility.

This sentence confirms The Law Code of Manu's statement that women are libidinous and cunning. The focalizer in this tale is Mantragupta. It is he who renders, word-for-word, how the princess invites Mantragupta to come to the harem. He does not seem to be offended by her immodest behaviour; on the contrary, he later praises her moral excellence.

10

kanyādūṣaṇadoṣaṃ dūrīkṛtya balātkāreṇa rantumudyuṅkte
(*pūrvapūthikā*, chap. IV, lines 2-3, p. 39)

Regardless of the crime of corrupting a virgin, he is resolved to enjoy me by force.

A woman's maidenhood is her main asset. According to The Law Code of Manu, virginity is a prerequisite for being properly married: "²²⁶The ritual formulas of marriage are applicable only to virgin girls and nowhere among any people to non-virgins, for they are

⁸¹ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (5.6.8), 126.

excluded from the rituals prescribed by Law.”⁸² Being a non-virgin was seen as a defect. If a man gave a girl in marriage who was not a virgin, he could be punished unless he announced the defect in time. This crime was equalled to giving in marriage a girl who was insane or suffered from leprosy.⁸³

The Arthaśāstra laid down rules against violating a virgin. It states: “For defiling a maiden of equal caste before she has reached maturity, the hand of the offender was to be cut off or a fine of 400 *paṇa* was to be imposed; if she had attained maturity, the offender’s middle finger was to be cut off or a fee of 200 *paṇa* was to be imposed.”⁸⁴

3.4 The giving of a woman

The giving of a woman is a common theme in the DKC. The text contains several references to girls given in marriage, and of girls given as a gift. The Law Code of Manu emphasises the giving aspect in the marriage rituals, when a father gives his daughter to her husband, as “the act of giving is the reason for his lordship over her.”⁸⁵

Rules concerning marriage are laid down in The Law Code of Manu, which states that the act of securing a girl a good husband was one of the main responsibilities of a father. If the father failed to find a man with good qualities for her, The Law Code of Manu states that it is better for her to stay with her parents all her life than to live with a man with no good qualities. However, as stated above, from the point of view of the parents, having an unmarried daughter in the house both disgraced them and, as few respectable means of sustenance were open to women, placed the burden of her maintenance on them. In case the father fails to find a husband for his daughter, The Law Code of Manu opens a possibility for the daughter to take the case into her own hands: “⁹⁰For three years shall a girl wait after the onset of her puberty; after that time, she may find for herself a husband of equal status.”⁸⁶ The act of seeking a husband, if the father has failed his obligation to find one, is sanctioned by the same law: “⁹¹If a woman who has not been given in marriage finds a husband on her own, she does not incur any sin, and neither does the man she finds.”⁸⁷

⁸² Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (8.226), 179.

⁸³ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (8.205), 178.

⁸⁴ Sternbach, Ludwig, “Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya’s Arthaśāstra”, 51.

⁸⁵ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (5.152), 146.

⁸⁶ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (9.90), 194.

⁸⁷ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (9.91), 194.

The DKC also contains passages where girls are given as gifts. The act of giving could be voluntary or it could be forced by different means.

3

vīraketurapi bhūto mahadupāyanamiva tanayām mattakālāyādāt
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. III, line 12, p. 30)

Vīraketu was thus frightened into giving his daughter to Mattakāla as if she was a great gift.

Mattakāla, king of Lāṭa, wants to marry the beautiful daughter of king Vīraketu. Vīraketu refuses and Mattakāla besieges his capital, and forces Vīraketu to hand over his daughter. The princess is totally at her father's mercy, as she can be given away as an object. Her father can dispose of her voluntarily, or as here, he can be forced to give her away.

The event is related by an old Brahmin. We are told that the king was frightened, but we are not told what the princess felt. Is that because the princess's feelings are irrelevant to the author, and by implication, irrelevant to his audience?

4

taruṇīlābhahṛṣṭacetā lāṭapatiḥ
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. III, line 13, p. 30)

The Lāṭa king was delighted at heart by the acquisition of the young woman.

The same question as raised above may be raised here. A woman can be obtained, and the king is pleased to have acquired a young woman. What does the young woman feel? The king who has won her is named Mattakāla. *Matta* may be translated as excited, drunk, intoxicated, or excited by sexual passion or desire, and *kāla* denotes black or a dark colour. Judged by the name, which in Sanskrit narrative literature often denotes the quality of the person, Mattakāla is obviously not a man of good qualities. Is the young woman terrified by the fact that she will be turned over to a rival king? Is she excited? She would certainly not be indifferent.

This form of forced marriage, called a *rākṣasa* marriage is one of the eight types of marriages listed in The Laws of Manu, and is an option only for *kṣatriyas*. A *rākṣasa* marriage is defined as “the violent seizure or rape of a girl after the defeat or destruction of her relatives.”⁸⁸

5

(*Mānapāla*) *nījanāthāvamānakhinnamānasō'ntar bibheda*
(*pūrvapūthikā*, chap. III, line 2, p. 31)

(*Mānapāla*) was pained at heart by the humiliation of his master.

Mānapāla, king *Vīraketu*'s minister, is concerned with the fact that the king had been humiliated. The king has been forced to give up his daughter, who might have been utilised differently: for example by giving her in marriage to someone with whom the king wanted to make an alliance. It is the old Brahmin, who relates this story to *Somadatta*, who is the focalizer in the tale. If the Brahmin has supplied information about the princess' emotional state, then *Somadatta* has omitted it for some reason. More likely, such information was irrelevant since a girl, who was an object that could be given away, also could serve as a trophy of war.⁸⁹

6

saṃtuṣṭamanā rājā ... nījatanayāṃ mahyam adāt
(*pūrvapūthikā*, chap. III, lines 10-11, p. 33)

Highly pleased, the king ... gave me his own daughter in marriage.

Somadatta kills *Mattakāla*. The king is pleased and gives his daughter to *Somadatta* as a token of gratitude. This time the princess is given in marriage to a young man of excellent

⁸⁸ Monier-Williams, Monier, *A Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1997), 871.

⁸⁹ Altekar, A. S., *The position of Women in Hindu Civilization, From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2005), 37-38.

qualities, who is also appointed heir to the throne. Her father has fulfilled his responsibility to secure his daughter a proper husband.

42

*tvadambayā kāntimatyā ceyaṃ garbhasṭhaiva dyūtajitā svamātrā tavaiva jāyātvena
samakalpyata*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. IV, lines 5-7, p. 136)

But her own mother pledged her as a wife for you, being won by your mother
Kāntimatī in gambling (with her mother), even while she was still in the womb.

This is in many ways a strange line. Firstly, because of the rules The Law Code of Manu lays down on ownership of offspring: “³²It is acknowledged that a son belongs to the husband; but scripture is divided with respect to the sire—some argue for the man who fathers the child, others for the “owner of the field.”⁹⁰ In the following verses, The Law Code of Manu elaborates on these two views. Is it the man who brings up the child that is the owner, or is the owner of “the field”, a metaphor for the woman? Nowhere is the woman seen as the owner of the child. Therefore, how would it be possible for the princess to pledge her unborn baby as a future wife to anyone without her husband’s consent?

Secondly, The Law Code of Manu urges the king to ban gambling: “²²¹The king shall suppress gambling and betting within his realm; they are the two vices of rulers that devastate a kingdom. ²²²The king should have anyone who engages in gambling or facilitates gambling executed.”⁹¹ The law makes it clear that gambling is a highly undesirable activity. The Arthaśāstra, on the punishment of immodest wives, states that a woman, who against her husband’s wishes takes part in games, or drinks, is to be fined three *paṇa*.⁹² This statement makes it even more unlikely that the queen independently would bet the unborn baby.

What is most likely is that it already was decided that if the baby turned out to be a girl, she would be given in marriage to Kāntimatī’s son Arthapala to form an alliance between the two families. If this is the case, then the gambling was just an amusement for the two

⁹⁰ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (9.32), 191.

⁹¹ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (9.221, 9.222), 201.

⁹² Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, 179.

highborn ladies. What would be interesting to know, though, is whether an unborn boy could be won in the same way in gambling?

That women could be won or lost by men in gambling is an old theme. In the gambling hymn in the Ṛg Veda, a husband stakes and loses his own wife.⁹³ In the Mahābhārata, Yudhiṣṭhira stakes his wife Draupadī, and loses her, in a dicing game with Śakuni.⁹⁴ Yudhiṣṭhira has already lost everything he owns, including himself, and by wagering Draupadī he hopes to win back his own freedom.

44

yaṃ cābhilaṣetsā'muṣmai deyā
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 13, p. 149)

Let her be given over (in marriage) to whomsoever she desires.

Princess Kandukāvati was born after her father had fasted before the goddess Vindyaśinī; a form of Durga. The goddess instructed the father to give her in marriage to a man of her own choice. The princess was thus free to marry the one she loved, or at least one she liked.

The marriage of free choice is a special form of the *gāndharva* marriage, which is one of the eight types of marriages listed in The Law Code of Manu and which by tradition was considered lawful for *kṣatriyas*. Such a marriage was as a rule concluded by performing the rites that normally were performed at a religious marriage.⁹⁵

The theme of a princess choosing her own husband is well known in Sanskrit epic literature. The term *svayaṃvara* (self choosing) is often used to describe the election of a husband by a princess or a daughter of a *kṣatriya* at a public assembly of suitors.⁹⁶ Sometimes the choice depended on the fulfilment of a particular condition involving a test of the skill of the suitor. Draupadī, Sītā, Damayantī, and Sāvitrī, all chose their husbands in some form of a *svayaṃvara*. Draupadī chose Arjuna after he had exhibited extraordinary skill in archery and

⁹³ Macdonell, Arthur Anthony, *A Vedic Reader for Students*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999), 186-194.

⁹⁴ Buitenen, J. A. B. van, *The Mahābhārata*, 2. *The book of the assembly hall*. 3. *The book of the forest*, Translated and edited by J. A. B. Buitenen, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 137-138.

⁹⁵ Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, 168-169.

⁹⁶ Monier-Williams, Monier, *A Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, 1278.

successfully hit the eye of a fish.⁹⁷ Sītā chose Rāma at another great archery contest, Damayantī chose Nala at a great ceremony, and Sāvitrī travelled around the country until she found Satyavant.⁹⁸

3.5 Women – clever in the art of concealment

Nonverbal communication, such as gestures and facial expressions, was highly developed among people connected with the court, and women were particularly skilled in using and interpreting such communication.⁹⁹ The Law Code of Manu states that “²⁶[i]nner thoughts are discerned by the bearing, expressions, gait, gestures, and manner of speaking, and by changes in the eyes and face”.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, the Arthaśāstra instructs the royal messenger to be aware of rival kings’ intentions by closely observing their speech, glances and facial expressions for signs of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.¹⁰¹

The scrutiny of external gestures was also important in romance. Many of the *sūtras* in the Kāmasūtra are concerned with the interpretation of gestures and signals. This *sūtra* teaches a man how to read a young woman’s interest: “She does not look at him face to face. When he looks at her, she acts embarrassed. She reveals the splendid parts of her body, under some pretext. She looks at the man when he is otherwise distracted, cannot see her, or has gone past her.”¹⁰²

Both men and woman were encouraged to observe behaviour and facial expressions to discern the inner states, intentions, and inclinations of the objects of their romantic feelings: important skills that required both experience and training. According to the Nāṭyaśāstra (a text on dramaturgy which is believed to have been written before the 3rd century AD¹⁰³) a *bāhyā nāyikā* (a courtesan: *bāhyā* denotes an external woman in contrast to an *abhyantarā*, who is an internal, or respectable woman) could be depicted displaying her love: “She expresses her passion by casting side-long glances (*kaṭākṣa*), touching her ornaments, itching

⁹⁷ Buitenen, J. A. B. van, *The Mahābhārata, 1. The book of the Beginning*, Translated and edited by J. A. B. van Buitenen, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 344-364.

⁹⁸ Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, 169.

⁹⁹ Daud, Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 196-198.

¹⁰⁰ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (8.26), 168.

¹⁰¹ Daud, Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, 196.

¹⁰² Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (3.3.26), 85.

¹⁰³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “natyasastra“, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/406618/Natyasastra#tab=active~checked%2Citems~checked&title=N%C4%81%E1%B9%ADya-%C5%9B%C4%81stra%20-%20Britannica%20Online%20Encyclopedia>, (26.10.2008).

ears, scratching the ground with her toes, revealing the breasts or the navel, cleaning the nails and gathering her hair.”¹⁰⁴ A highborn lady, on the other hand, was to be depicted showing her feelings differently: “She looks continuously with blooming eyes, conceals her smile, speaks slowly and with downcast face, gives a reply with a smile, conceals her sweat and appearance, has throbbing lips and is trembling.”¹⁰⁵ The act of casting side-long glances as an overt and promiscuous way of showing one’s passion, is confirmed by the Kāmasūtra: “The following are women who can be had without any effort, who can be had merely by making advances: ...a woman who, when someone looks at her, looks sideways;”¹⁰⁶ The Kāmasūtra employs the word *pārśvavilokinī* to denote “a women who looks sideways”.

The DKC contains many references to highborn women who are masters of the art of concealed gestures, and who use sidelong glances (*kaṭākṣa*, *apāṅga īkṣaṇa*, *apāṅga vīkṣita*) as part of their repertoire. To convey their feelings, these women seem to use a mixture of gestures. Some appropriate to upper class women and some not, if one is to judge by the sources mentioned above.

7

manasā’bhimukhaiśca samākuñcitai rāgalajjāntarālavartibhir-
apāṅgavartibhirīkṣaṇaviśeṣairnijaṇamanovṛttimakathayat
(pūrvapīṭhikā, chap. IV, line 16, p. 37 and line 1, p. 38)

With meaningful glances from the outer corner of her eyes, directed to me and darting between passion and bashfulness, she silently conveyed her thoughts.

The merchant’s daughter Bālacandrikā employs her knowledge of nonverbal communication when she lets Puṣpodbhava know what she feels. Since Puṣpodbhava understands what these meaningful glances mean, he must have knowledge and experience in interpreting gestures and facial expressions. To convey her feelings, Bālacandrikā makes use of sidelong glances, a well-known gesture of coquetry, which she tones down by a display of embarrassment (caused by her modesty).

¹⁰⁴ Nāṭyaśāstra quoted in Shah, Shalini, “In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries”, in *The Medieval History Journal*, Vol. 5, No 1, (2002), 149.

¹⁰⁵ Nāṭyaśāstra quoted in Shah, Shalini, “In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries”, 149.

¹⁰⁶ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (5.1.52), 108.

8

caturagūḍhaceṣṭābhīrasyā manonurāgaṃ
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. IV, line 2, p. 38)

(Having clearly perceived) her love (for me) from her clever covert gestures ...

Bālacandrikā is clever at communicating by concealed signs. Equally clever is Puṣpodbhava, who interprets these signs correctly.

9

tasyāḥ saśaṃbhramapremalajjākautukamanoraṃ līlāvilokanasukhamanubhavan
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. IV, line 7, p. 38)

It was a pleasure to watch her lovely looks, all the more fascinating because of their confusion of love, bashfulness and curiosity.

Again there is a display of competing emotions, which adds to her charm in Puṣpodbhava's opinion.

This line is interesting, because the display of competing emotions is a type of coquetry also recommended for courtesans. In the Kuṭṭanīmatam, an eight-century text by Dāmodaragupta, the old bawd Vikarālā instructs the young courtesan Mālatī in how to entrance her paramour: “you must come towards your man with demonstrations of love and shame, of apprehension and desire”.¹⁰⁷ The reason is stated quite clearly in the Kāmasūtra: “A man scorns a woman who is easy to get, but desires a woman who is hard to get.”¹⁰⁸ It is ironic that a courtesan is encouraged to play hard to get to please her customer. It certainly support with view that the concept of femaleness is confusing.

34

striyaścopdhīnāmudbhavakṣetram
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, line 16, p. 105 and line 1 p. 106)

¹⁰⁷ Mathers, E. Powys, *Eastern Love, The Lessons of a Bawd of Damodaragupta*, Volume I, (London: John Rodker, 1927), 17.

¹⁰⁸ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (5.1.52), 108.

And women are the source of deceptions.

This line states Upahāravarman's thoughts, while he was pondering how to get information about the king's harem. Upahāravarman comes up with an intricate plan for how to make queen Kalpasundarī fall in love with him, and how to get rid of her husband. He sends an old woman as a messenger to the queen. Why then is it that women are the source of deception? Is this view inferred from what The Law Code of Manu assigns to women: malice and bad conduct? Surely, it is a woman who acts as a messenger, but it is Upahāravarman who is the architect behind the plan. Could the answer be that deceit and slyness are praiseworthy qualities in a man, while they are signs of bad conduct in a woman?

4 The Wife – praised and restrained

The dominant role for a woman is her role as a wife. It is in the capacity of a wife that she may become worthy of reverence and respect. As a married woman, she moves in with her in-laws and becomes embedded in her husband's patrilineal kin group. Young and uneducated, she becomes economically dependent upon her husband and his family. (Because the marriage age was generally low, and since women were excluded from Vedic knowledge, it is doubtful if an average girl received any education at all. However, girls in rich, aristocratic, or royal families were probably given a reasonably good literary education, as well as training in the domestic, culinary and fine arts.¹⁰⁹) When The Law Code of Manu speaks about women, it is almost always with respect to their role as a wife.

When a woman by her very nature is unreliable, unrestrained in her sexual behaviour, unfaithful, and hard-hearted (see chapter 3.3), how is it then possible to metamorphose into a virtuous, modest and benevolent wife? Two conditions may contribute in answering this question. Firstly, by marriage a woman takes on the qualities of her husband. The Law Code of Manu states: “²²When a wife unites with her husband according to rule, she takes on the qualities he has, like a river uniting with the ocean.”¹¹⁰ The law goes on by giving examples of how even women of the lowest birth became worthy of respect when they married

¹⁰⁹ Altekar, A. S, *Education in Ancient India*, 217-220.

¹¹⁰ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (9.22), 191.

husbands with eminent qualities. The Law Code of Manu does not mention how it works if the husband's qualities are defective. However, ideally this should not happen, since the father's responsibility is to make sure that she is married to a man of good qualities. Still, as we have seen, there are circumstances that allow a girl to make her own choice in selecting a husband (see chapter 3.4)

Secondly, with a marriage the control of a female's sexuality is transferred from her parents to her husband. Even though her qualities have been changed in accordance with her husband's qualities, it is still important for a man to guard his wife: "for by carefully guarding his wife, a man guards his offspring, his character, his family, himself, and the Law specific to him."¹¹¹ These words of The Law Code of Manu give the basis for a woman's status in a patriarchal society. From the male perspective, it is her purity and fidelity that empower her and that entitle her to assist her husband in important religious rites. A chaste wife is a blessing for the husband, because he can be sure that the offspring are his:

²⁶On account of the offspring, a wife is the bearer of many blessings, worthy of honor, and the light within a home; indeed, in a home no distinction at all exists between a wife (*strī*) and Śrī, the Goddess of Fortune. ²⁷She begets children; and when they are born, she brings them up—day in, day out, the wife, evidently, is the linchpin of domestic affairs. ²⁸Offspring, rites prescribed by Law, obedient service and one's forefathers—all this depends on the wife. ²⁹A woman who controls her mind, speech, and body and is never unfaithful to her husband attains the worlds of her husband¹¹²

Olivelle comments that the word *śūsṛūṣā* (obedient service) is a term that usually refers to the service rendered by a person of lower rank to one of higher rank, especially by a pupil to his teacher. He uses the term to denote the wife's care for her husband's physical needs, such as preparing and serving his food. Nevertheless, the term clearly states with what kind of attitude a wife should serve her husband. *Sūtras* in both The Law Code of Manu and the Kāmasūtra reinforce this notion and explicitly state that the serving aspect of a wife's duties towards her husband is essential. The Kāmasūtra states that a wife should treat her husband like a god and make sure that everything she does is in agreement with him.¹¹³ While the Kāmasūtra focuses on what is pleasing to her husband, such as taking care of the household chores, and dressing and behaving in accordance with his taste, it also gives the impression that there are elements of mutual pleasure in the relationship. The Law Code of

¹¹¹ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (9.7), 190.

¹¹² Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (9.26, 9.27, 9.28, 9.29), 191.

¹¹³ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (4.1.1), 94.

Manu, on the other hand, states that even if a husband “¹⁵⁴...may be bereft of virtue, given to lust, and totally devoid of good qualities, a good woman should always worship her husband like a god.”¹¹⁴ In addition, service to her husband is a woman’s only means to salvation. The reason is that “¹⁵⁵[f]or a woman, there is no independent sacrifice, vow, or fast; a woman will be exalted in heaven by the mere fact that she has obediently served her husband.”¹¹⁵

Even though wives were generally restricted, both sexually and behaviourally, some of them found ways to circumvent male control. High born ladies were often depicted indulging in illicit love relationships. In the DKC, Kalpasundarī secretly met with her lover Upahāravarma in the pleasure garden (see chap. 4.2, sentence 38). Likewise, the Kāmasūtra states: “the women of the harem generally get their women servants to bring in men-about-town dressed as women”.¹¹⁶ This is exactly what happens in the DKC.

Finally, as a general rule, a wife was not entitled to own any property, because: “¹¹⁶[w]ife, son, and slave—all these three, tradition tells us, are without property. Whatever they may earn becomes the property of the man to whom they belong.”¹¹⁷ There are, however, exceptions to this rule. In another *sūtra* of The Law Code of Manu, it is made clear that: “¹¹⁸Tradition presents six types of women’s property: what a woman receives at the nuptial fire, what she receives when she is taken away, what she is given as a token of love, and what she receives from her brothers, mother, and father.”¹¹⁸ The Arthaśāstra allows women to own their own money, up to 2000 *paṇa*, in addition to their jewellery and clothing. Any sum above this is to be taken care of by her husband.¹¹⁹ These rules on property held for most married women. The Arthaśāstra has special rules concerning a royal lady’s right to own property, which will be shown in the analysis below (see chap.4.4).

4.1 The good wife

Almost all of the married women in the DKC are depicted as good wives, with the exception of Dhūminī (see chap. 3.3, sentence 51 and 52). Kalpasundarī, who also deviates from the norms of a faithful wife, has her particular reasons to behave as she does (see chap. 4.2). The words used to denote these women are *ramaṇī* (beautiful young woman, wife), *dāra* (wife),

¹¹⁴ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (5.154), 146.

¹¹⁵ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (5.155), 146.

¹¹⁶ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (5.6.6), 126.

¹¹⁷ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (8.416), 189.

¹¹⁸ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (9.194), 200.

¹¹⁹ Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, 178.

vallabhā (beloved female, wife), *patnī* (wife, mistress), *jāyā* ("bringing forth", wife), *bhāryā*, feminine of *bhārya* (to be borne or supported, wife), *strī* (woman, female, wife), *pativrātā* (devoted and virtuous wife), and *grhīṇī* (mistress of a house, wife), all of them carrying positive connotations.

50

kiṃ grhīṇaḥ priyahitāya dāraguṇāḥ
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 16, p. 156)

What is dear and beneficial for a householder? The virtues of a housewife.

53

nāstyadārāṇāmananugūṇadārāṇām vā sukhaṃ nāma
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 3-4, p. 159)

There is no happiness for those who have no wife, or for those who have no wife of corresponding qualities.

When a twice-born man has completed his studies with his master as a *brahmacārin* (student of the Veda), he moves back to his parents' house, marries and becomes a *grhastha* (householder).¹²⁰ The basis for a happy marriage is to find a wife who belongs to the same class as the husband, and who possesses the right bodily features: a fine body, a beautiful head of hair, small teeth, and delicate limbs. In addition, she should have a pleasant name, and walk slowly like a goose or an elephant. That the wife belongs to the same class as the husband is particularly important when the twice-born man marries a first wife.¹²¹

The virtues of a housewife are listed in detail in the *Kāmasūtra*. Among the things she should do is to keep the house clean and shiny, make sure that the offerings are done regularly and properly, prepare the food her husband likes, dress herself in a way that her husband finds attractive, only with her husband's permission go to a social gathering, serve her father-in-law

¹²⁰ The other two *āśramas*, or stages of a man's life, are the *vānaprastha* (hermit) and *saṃnyāsin* (ascetic).

¹²¹ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (3.4, 3.10, 3.12), 108.

and her mother-in-law, remaining dependent on them, never answering back, never laughing too loud, and always be moderate in her enjoyments.¹²²

A passage in the Mahābhārata praises women for being the source of men's joy. Even an angry man must: "not be harsh to a woman, remembering that on her depend the joys of love, happiness, and virtue. For woman is the everlasting field, in which the Self is born."¹²³

54

āsajjati ca me hṛdayamasyāmeva tatparīkṣyaināmudaheyam
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 1, p. 161)

My heart is set on this girl (Gominī) already, so putting her to the test, I will marry her.

The rich merchant's son, Śaktikumāra, had travelled around in search for a proper wife when he came to Gominī's house. After having studied her bodily features without finding any defects, he wants to test her abilities as a housewife. She is given a difficult task: making a proper meal of a handful of rice. She passes the test to his contentment; he marries her, and takes her home. Gominī is the prototype of a good wife. She is beautiful, skilled, economic, humble, modest, and vigilant with regard to Śaktikumāra's needs.

55

nītvaitadanapekṣaḥ kāmapi gaṇikāmarodhamakarot | tāmāpyasau
priyasakhīmivopācarat
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 10-12, p. 163)

After he had taken her home, he neglected her and attached himself to a courtesan. She (Gominī) even treated this woman as a dear friend.

Gominī illustrates the ultimate qualities of a *pativrata*, by placing her husband's needs above those of her own. As a good wife, her duty is to let her own happiness be subordinate to

¹²² Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (4.1.3-38), 94-96.

¹²³ The Mahābhārata quoted in Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, 182.

that of her husband. Even though her husband is unfaithful, she humbly serves both him and her rival. Gominī's treatment of the courtesan is in accordance with the Kāmasūtra instructions for a senior wife, namely to "look upon the newly arrived woman as a sister."¹²⁴ Thus it seems that Gominī looks at the courtesan as a co-wife, possibly wedded to her husband in a temporary *gāndharva* marriage.

Kale argues that Gominī's husband was not really attached to the courtesan. He was merely testing her virtues and her loyalty.¹²⁵ If this is the case, his need to assure himself of his wife's good qualities has taken precedence over his wife's happiness. In other words, he has shown the opposite qualities of what is expected of a good wife; he has subjugated his wife's emotional needs to those of his own.

56

patiṃ ca daivatamiva muktatandrā paryacarat | gṛhakāryāṇī cāhīnamanvatiṣṭat
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 12-13, p. 163)

She (Gominī) persistently worshipped her husband as a god, and performed her household duties without fail.

Gominī is unwavering in her devotion to her husband, and her husband is pleased. Delighted by her virtues, he rewards her by putting her in charge of the entire household. *He* could then enjoy *trivarga* (the three aims of life); *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (love), and *dharma* (virtue).

The story ends with an affirmation; the virtues of a wife are the source of happiness and welfare for a householder. Nowhere is there mention of the wife's needs or happiness. On the contrary, after she has passed the test, she is given more work and more responsibility, because her husband is convinced that she can handle it.

40

strīdharmascaiṣa yadaduṣṭasya duṣṭasya vā bharturgatirgantavyā | tadahamamunaiva
saha citāgnimāroksyāmi.

¹²⁴ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (4.2.4), 98.

¹²⁵ Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, edited by M.R. Kale, (Bombay: Gopal Narayan & Co., 1925), [104].

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. IV, lines 1-2, p. 131)

Also, it is the duty of a wife to share the destiny of her husband, whether he is good or wicked. Therefore I shall mount the funeral pyre beside my husband.

41

asya tu pañigrāhakasya gatimananuprapadyamānā bhavatkulaṃ kalaṅkayeyam
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. IV, line 13, p. 132)

But if I do not share the fate of him who took my hand in marriage, I would be disgracing your family.

Kāntimatī is asking the king, who is her relative, for his consent to ascend the funeral pyre of her husband. The king believes that her husband is dead due to a poisonous snake bite. This practice is the infamous *satī* (literally meaning a good and virtuous or faithful wife), where the wife's faithfulness includes following her husband in death. Basham claims that the custom of *satī* was in theory voluntary, but one cannot rule out that social and family pressure might have been triggering forces. It was high-caste widows in particular that cremated themselves alive on the funeral pyre, and especially those of the *kṣatriya* class.¹²⁶ That Kāntimatī is a princess, and belongs to the warrior class, may explain her suggestion to commit *satī*. The class affiliation may also explain why the king's family might be disgraced if she refrains from this custom.

Though the Law Code of Manu repeatedly states the wife's duty to remain faithful to her deceased husband, it never mentions the custom of *satī*. It has, however, several rules concerning widowhood. “¹²⁷After her husband is dead, she may voluntarily emaciate her body by eating pure flowers, roots, and fruits; but she must never mention even the name of another man.”¹²⁷ A widow could generally not remarry, and as a good woman “devoted to a single husband, she should remain patient, controlled, and celibate until her death.”¹²⁸ Even if her husband died while she was still very young and she was without children, she should remain

¹²⁶ Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, 188.

¹²⁷ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (5.157), 146.

¹²⁸ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (5.158), 146.

celibate, because “a good woman, though she be sonless, will go to heaven when she steadfastly adheres to the celibate life after her husband’s death.”¹²⁹

While the wife is considered auspicious while her husband is alive, she is seen as inauspicious upon his death. A widow was not allowed to attend family festivals, as she was thought to bring bad luck on all present. Her time should be spent in prayer and other religious activities for the benefit of her deceased husband, and if she failed to observe a strict discipline, she might get a very unhappy rebirth. In addition, her failings could cause suffering to her dead husband in his after-life.¹³⁰

For a widower, the situation was different. If a man lost his wife, he was not to remain a widower. The Law Code of Manu states that “[a]fter he has given his sacred fires to his predeceased wife at her funeral, he should marry a wife again and establish anew his sacred fires.”¹³¹

65

aho mātmyaṃ pativrātānām

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VIII, line 10, p. 204)

Oh, the great power of the *pativrātās* (chaste and virtuous wives)!

Queen Vasumdhārā had killed Mitravarman with a poisoned garland, while uttering the words: *sa evāyamasiprahāraḥ pāpīyasastava bhavatu yadyasmi pativrātā*¹³² (If I am a chaste and virtuous wife, let this garland be as a sword to you, villain). Later the garland was secretly dunked in an antidote before it was given to her daughter Mañjuvādīnī. People were astonished to see that Mitravarman, who had offended the virtuous queen, was killed, while her daughter remained unharmed.

This line confirms the high esteem in which a *pativrātā* was held, and that it was a common belief that a wife’s veneration and loyal service to her husband might give her magical power. However, Daṇḍin mocks this superstition, as he reveals that the queen’s magical power is nothing but fraud.

¹²⁹ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (5.160), 146, 147.

¹³⁰ Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, 186-187.

¹³¹ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (5.168), 147.

¹³² Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, lines 14-15, 203.

Both Vasuṃdharā and Dhūminī (see chap. 3.3, sentence 52) took advantage of this belief. Dhūminī was praised because she took care of what people believed to be her crippled husband, while Vasuṃdharā was praised because her words transformed the harmless garland into a deadly weapon. Although they both were clever and cunning, their actions yielded different results. Dhūminī was exposed and punished, while Vasuṃdharā achieved her ambitious goal of securing the throne for her son. In addition, Vasuṃdharā acted on Viśruta's advice. It was he that devised the intricate plan of how to regain the lost kingdom.

4.2 The dissatisfied wife

The Law Code of Manu advises householders to honour their wives and keep them happy. Marital harmony is only achieved if there is mutual contentment, and where marital harmony exists, the whole family prospers: “⁶⁰Good fortune smiles incessantly on a family where the husband always finds delight in his wife, and the wife in her husband.”¹³³ A happy, sparkling wife is essential for the creation of a family, because “if the wife does not sparkle, she does not arouse her husband. And if the husband is not aroused, there will be no offspring.”¹³⁴ The motivation for keeping the wife happy is that it benefits the husband, who is the owner of the offspring.

The Kāmasūtra states that if the woman does not experience the pleasures of love, she might hate him and leave him for another man. Furthermore, a woman who hates her husband, or is hated by her husband, is listed among those women who could be won without effort.¹³⁵

35

nātirocate ma eṣa bhartā viśeṣataścaiṣu vāsareṣu
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, line 11, p. 109)

I do not like my husband much, and least of all these days.

¹³³ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (3.60), 111.

¹³⁴ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (3.61), 111.

¹³⁵ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (3.2.35, 5.1.52), 81-82, 108.

Queen Kalpasundarī detests her husband for several reasons. His is cruel, his body is misshapen, he has no skills in erotic affairs, he takes little interest in the arts, poetry or dramas, and he is a braggart. He has also given a dancing girl too much attention, and has taken his pleasure with her.

In comparison to Gominī, who served her husband loyally even when he amused himself with a courtesan (see chap. 4.1, sentence 55), Kalpasundarī refuses to follow The Law Code of Manu’s command of being devoted to her husband, regardless of his character and his behaviour.

36

tatkimityapekṣyate

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, line 3, p. 110)

Why should then respect be shown to him (by me)?

Kalpasundarī raises an obvious question. Why should she respect someone who is without praiseworthy traits? The Law Code of Manu advised on the grounds for respect: “¹³⁶Wealth, kin, age, ritual life, and the fifth, knowledge—these are the grounds for respect; and each subsequent one carries greater weight than each preceding.”¹³⁶ Kalpasundarī complains that her husband is unkind and that he lacks knowledge of the fine arts (see sentence 35, above).

It is interesting that Daṇḍin has put these words in Kalpasundarī’s mouth. The queen is depicted as exceedingly beautiful and talented. Is Daṇḍin suggesting that since she and her husband are so evidently mismatched, it is understandable that she feels aversion towards him? Or is he just anticipating that she later will be united with Upahāvarman?

Kalpasundarī’s father had initially promised her in marriage to Prahāvarman’s son, but as he was believed to be lost, she was given to Vikāṭavarman. Her father has thus failed in his duty of finding her a husband of good character. Secondly, as Prahāvarman’s son, Upahāvarman, turns out to be alive, her father may actually have transgressed against The Law Code of Manu, which states that “[a]fter giving away a virgin to someone, a prudent man

¹³⁶ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (2.136), 102.

must never give her away again, for in giving what has already been given, he becomes guilty of a lie to a human being.”¹³⁷

These lines (35, 36, and the next, 37) are among the very few in the text where a woman voices her emotions.

37

*aviṣahyaṃ hi yoṣitāmanaṅgaśaraṇiṣaṅgībhūtacetasāmaṇiṣṭajanasaṃvāsayantraṇā-
duḥkham*

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, lines 4-5, p. 110)

The misery of being forced to share her life with a man she detests can hardly be borne by a woman whose mind has become the quiver of *Anaṅga*’s¹³⁸ arrows.

Kalpasundarī has given one additional reason for why she hates being with her husband; she is in love with Upahāravarman. Not only does she decline to loyally serve her husband, she also admits that she desires another man. This behaviour is in striking contrast to what The Law Code of Manu prescribes as suitable for a virtuous wife.

38

ato ’munāpuruṣena māmadyodyānamādhavīgrhe samāgamaya

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, lines 5-6, p. 110)

Do therefore arrange for me to meet with this man today in the *Mādhavī* pavilion in the garden.

Kalpasundarī initiates a rendezvous with Upahāravarman in the pleasure garden. She seems to be ignoring the punishments The Law Code of Manu’s prescribes for unfaithful wives, namely that she “becomes disgraced in the world, takes birth in a jackal’s womb, and

¹³⁷ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (9.77), 193.

¹³⁸ Name of Kāma (god of love, so called because he was made bodiless by a flash from the eye of Śiva for having attempted to disturb his life of austerity by filling him with love for Pārvatī), Monier-Williams, Monier, *A Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, 24.

is afflicted with evil diseases.”¹³⁹ On the contrary, she behaves according to how The Kāmasūtra describes women’s nature; she “does not consider religion or the violation of religion; she just desires.”¹⁴⁰

It must be added that Kalpasundarī was predestined to be unfaithful. In a former existence, when she was *surasarīt* (the river of the gods: Ganges), she had been annoyed by *hastivaktra* (the elephant-faced god Gaṇeśa), who was splashing her about. She cursed him to be reborn as a mortal being. He in turn, cursed her to be common to more than one man. She pleaded to only have had one previous husband before she was reunited with her beloved, who now is reborn as Upahāravarman. Since she is predestined to become Upahāravarman’s wife also in this life, her actions are unavoidable.

4.3 The deserted wife

The highest law between husband and wife is that they should be faithful to each other until death. Neither “[a] mother, father, wife, or son ought to be abandoned. Anyone who abandons these when they have not fallen from their caste shall be fined 600 by the king.”¹⁴¹ However, there are occasions when man has the right to repudiate his wife:

⁷⁷For one year let a husband tolerate a wife who loathes him; after one year, he should confiscate her inheritance and stop cohabiting with her. ⁷⁸If a wife commits a transgression against her husband who is deranged, drunk, or sick, deprived of her ornaments and belongings, she should be cast out for three months. ⁸⁰When a wife drinks liquor or is dishonest, cantankerous, sick, vicious, or wasteful, she may be superseded at any time by marriage to another wife. ⁸¹A barren wife may be superseded in the eight year; a wife whose children die, in the tenth; a wife who bears girls, in the eleventh; but a foul-mouthed wife, at once. ⁸³If a wife who has been superseded storms out of the house incensed, however, she should be locked up immediately or repudiated in the presence of the family.¹⁴²

Sūtra 81 shows that it was fairly easy to get rid of an unwanted wife, as she might be rejected for using improper language. In the DKC, wives are rejected by their husbands on two occasions, which will be discussed below. On one occasion a woman, the *yakṣī* Tārāvalī, walked out on her husband in jealous anger. For this transgression, she was punished to suffer the pain of separation for one year.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (9.30), 191.

¹⁴⁰ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (5.1.10), 104.

¹⁴¹ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (8.389), 188.

¹⁴² Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (9.77, 9.78, 9.80, 9.81, 9.83), 194.

¹⁴³ Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, lines 10-15, 141

A rejected wife was not allowed to remarry, even if her husband had forsaken her completely, since “neither sale nor dismissal cuts the wife loose from her husband.”¹⁴⁴ A man, on the other hand, was permitted to remarry even while his first wife was still alive. Remarriage is different from taking a second wife, as it refers to a man marrying another woman after he has rejected his first wife.

57

daurbhāgyaṃ nāma jīvanmaraṇamevāṅganānām, viśeṣataścakulavadhūnām
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 13-14, p. 164)

The unhappiness of being hated by one’s husband is simply a living death for any woman, and even more of a woman of high birth.

Ratnavatī, nicknamed Nimbavatī (a woman bitter as the *nimba* tree), was abandoned by her husband because she thoughtlessly had obstructed his enjoyment of union with her. We are not told exactly what Ratnavatī did to offend her husband, but she might have said something that aroused aversion in him. If this is the case, her husband has rejected her in accordance with the rules stated by The Law Code of Manu (above).

The fact that she has been spurned has brought shame upon her and her family. Instead of giving her comfort, her whole family, led by her mother, despises her. The desperate woman has only one option, and that is to make her husband take her back. Everyone, including herself, puts the blame on her. The reason for this reaction has to be inferred from what The Law Code of Manu has stated about serving a husband, which has been cited earlier in this thesis:

Firstly, a wife should treat her husband as her deity, and never do anything displeasing to him. Ratnavatī has displeased her husband severely, since he has rejected her. Secondly, she cannot be married again, and will therefore be without sustenance. As a highborn lady, it is difficult for her to earn a living and at the same time maintain a good reputation. Thirdly, as her own family despises her, it would be very difficult for her to stay with them. Even if she was to live with her family, she would be prone to baseless scandals about her character.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (9.46, 9.101), 192,195.

¹⁴⁵ Altekar, A. S., *The position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, 107-108.

Only two options seem open to her: Either she can embark on the ascetic path as a woman mendicant, or she must find a way to win her husband back.

58

*bhagavati patireva daivataṃ vanitānām, viśoṣataśca kulajānām | atastacchuśrūṣaṇ-
ābhyupāyahetubhūtaṃ kiṃcidācaraṇīyam*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 4-5, p. 165)

Revered lady, a woman's husband is her deity, and how much more for those of high birth. Hence something must be done to enable me to serve him again.

Pretending to be another woman, Ratnavatī makes her husband fall in love with her, and he elopes with her to a foreign country. When he later finds out that his beloved actually is his wife, he loves her even more, because she has arranged everything so well. Ratnavatī is not punished for using her “cunning nature” to deceive her husband, for her actions have benefited them both. Her husband escaped punishment for having stolen away a virgin, and Ratnavatī was restored to her position of a respected wife.

63

*vimarśe ca tasyāḥ śākinītvamaikamatyena pauraṇāmabhimatamāsīt | bhartrā ca
parityaktā...tena dhūrtena...agrhyata*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 20 p. 169 and line 1-2, p. 170)

After deliberation, the citizens agreed unanimously that she (Nitambavatī) was a witch. Abandoned by her husband...she was seized by the cunning man.

Nitambavatī has falsely been proven to be a *śākinī* (female demon) and her husband has rejected her. She had been framed by a man who is in love with her to leave her house in order to get a remedy for curing her husband's inability to beget children. After she has been spurned by her husband, Nitambavatī has no other options than to succumb to the evil man.

The story of Nitambavatī is told to prove that wisdom is the means to achieve what is difficult. In other words, the scoundrel who set her up has proved himself to be a wise man. The story contains no comments on the morality of his achievement, namely that the object of his desire has had her life ruined.

4.4 *Strīdhana* – women’s wealth

Strīdhana is a term used to denote property over which women, in normal times, were allowed absolute control. Only in times of extreme difficulty could *strīdhana* be used for the needs of the family. As wives were generally not entitled to own property, a married woman’s *strīdhana* might consist of a minor amount of money in addition to her personal belongings, such as clothing and jewellery (see chap. 4). If her family were rich, *strīdhana* in the form of jewellery might be substantial. However, gifts received from non-relatives and wages earned by the wife were not to be included in *strīdhana*. Whatever a wife earned she was obliged to hand over to her husband.¹⁴⁶ With regard to inheritance of *strīdhana*, The Law Code of Manu states that when a woman dies, her sons and daughters should divide the mother’s property among themselves.¹⁴⁷

39

asti cāyamartharāśiḥ

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, line 7, p. 110)

I have a great wealth.

Kalpasundarī plans to use her own wealth to replace her husband with Upahāravarman. The Arthaśāstra states that the first wife of the king, the *mahiṣī*, was to receive a salary amounting to 48000 *paṇa* per year. This is the same amount that the *purohita* (family priest) and the *yuvarāja* (crown prince) received. In comparison, an *adhyakṣa* (inspector) earned 1000 *paṇa* per year.¹⁴⁸ The queen could thus accumulate a substantial fortune that she could spend according to her own wishes.

5 The Courtesan – feared and desired

The highly accomplished courtesan, the *gaṇikā*, is an object of praise and respect, as well as of criticism and contempt. Her beauty, grace, refinement, and skills make her an attractive and desired companion. However, the fact that she is a supplier of sexual services in exchange for

¹⁴⁶ Altekar, A. S., *The position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, 231-235.

¹⁴⁷ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (9.192), 200.

¹⁴⁸ Sternbach, Ludwig, “Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya’s Arthaśāstra”, 33.

money also makes her a woman of disrepute. Her alleged greed and cynicism, combined with the fact that she is outside male control, make her a woman towards whom men must take precautions.

The way courtesans are portrayed in DKC largely supports these claims. The *gaṇikā* Kāmamañjarī is said to be the ornament of the capital of Aṅga, which implies that she is an asset to the city. She is honoured by the king for her achievements, and she is desired by many. She is excessively greedy, and she proves to be dangerous; she strips her clients of their wealth, and she is clever enough to seduce the great ascetic Marīci (see chap. 5.3, sentence 19). The ambivalence in the perception of the courtesan is shown in different places in the text. On the one hand, being desired by a superior courtesan is a compliment and a sign of good fortune (see chap. 5.2, sentences 22 and 23), but on the other, being addicted to courtesans are sign of dubious character in men (see chap. 5.2, sentence 59).

The life of the *gaṇikā* is totally different from that of the restricted wife. A courtesan is free to move about as she likes, she moves in public places, and her behaviour is unrestricted and frank. When her conduct so obviously contradicts the norms of proper female behaviour, and her profession is stigmatised, why then is she respected? The answer might be found in her education, which qualifies her to interact with men of knowledge and prestige, not only as a sex partner, but also as a social and intellectual companion. Kaul argues that the courtesan represents “a model for female behaviour at once novel, competent and tantalizing in its cultivation of intellect as well as sensuality.”¹⁴⁹

Her education consists of an extensive list of subjects, along with expertise in erotic love. Among the arts that should be studied were: singing, playing musical instruments, dancing, painting, cutting leaves into shapes, arranging flowers, preparing beds, preparing wines, needlework, reciting difficult words, reading aloud, staging plays and dialogs, architecture, the ability to test gold and silver, the ability to speak in sign language, knowledge of local dialects, knowledge of metre, and literary work.¹⁵⁰ A courtesan was also entitled to speak Sanskrit.¹⁵¹ In the DKC, Kāmamañjarī’s mother elaborates on the broad education of her daughter, which began when she was quite young.

¹⁴⁹ Kaul, Shonaleeka, “Woman about Town: An Exploration of the Sanskrit *Kāvya* Tradition”, *Studies in History*, Vol. 22, No. 1, (2006), 64.

¹⁵⁰ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (1.3.15), 14-15.

¹⁵¹ Shah, Shalini, “In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries”, 143.

The study of the sixty-four arts is also recommended for princesses and daughters of ministers of the state, a fact that places the *gaṇikā* in an elite group together with royalty and highborn ladies. The Kāmasūtra states:

¹⁷A courtesan who distinguishes herself in these arts
and who has a good nature, beauty, and good qualities,
wins the title of a Courtesan de Luxe
and a place in the public assembly.

¹⁸The king always honours her,
and virtuous people praise her.
men seek her, approach her for sex,
and she is a standard for other courtesans to strive for.

¹⁹The daughter of a king or of a minister of state,
if she knows the techniques,
can keep her husband in her power
even if he has a thousand women in his harem.¹⁵²

The last of these verses is alluded to in the DKC: *tadekavallabaḥ sa tu bahvavarodho 'pi vikaṭavarmā' iti*¹⁵³, where it is said that regardless of the many ladies in his harem, king Vikāṭavarman is attached only to his queen, Kalpasundarī.

As seen from the verses of the Kāmasūtra, a courtesan is worthy of praise and honour. The Law Code of Manu, on the other hand, emphasises the impurity of the courtesan, and warns Brahmins against eating "food given by a prostitute"¹⁵⁴, because such food "cuts him off from the worlds."¹⁵⁵ In these *sūtras*, the word *gaṇikā* is used to denote a prostitute. Nowhere in the DKC are courtesans referred to as impure, although on some occasions they have been mentioned by words carrying negative connotations. Furthermore, The Law Code of Manu encourages the king to punish skilled prostitutes, because they should be regarded "as open thorns on his people's side".¹⁵⁶ Here, the words *nipuṇā paṇyayoṣitā* (skilled woman who can be bought) is used in reference to a prostitute, an expression not found in the DKC.

There seem to be at least two different ways of facilitating and organizing the work of the courtesan. The courtesan could either organize her own business, or she could be a government servant employed by the king. In the DKC, the business of the courtesan seems to be a "private" enterprise, headed by the courtesan's mother and grandmother (see chap. 5.1, sentence 14). Here the courtesan, in agreement with her mother, is free to set the price on her

¹⁵² Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (1.3.17-19), 16.

¹⁵³ Kale, M.R, *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, lines 13-14, 106.

¹⁵⁴ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (4.209), 135, 545.

¹⁵⁵ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (4.219), 135, 548.

¹⁵⁶ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (9.259-260), 203, 795.

services and to dispose of her possessions as she likes.¹⁵⁷ This is confirmed by the DKC, where Kāmamañjarī gives away her fortune in expectancy of an even bigger one (see chap. 5.2, sentence 29).

If the courtesan is a government servant, she is under the supervision and control of the *gaṇikādhyakṣa* (superintendent of the king's courtesans). By entering the service of the king, the *gaṇikā* loses her freedom. She is granted a monthly salary, she receives all the necessities for performing her duties, such as garments, and maintenance of her household, and she also enjoys some security in that she will be offered work in the king's storehouse or kitchen when she no longer is capable of serving as a courtesan. The *gaṇikādhyakṣa* sets the price on her services, and he collects her earnings and transfers them to the treasury of the king. She has, however, the full right of ownership to her jewellery, and can dispose of it as she likes.¹⁵⁸

A *gaṇikā* can either come from a family of *gaṇikās*, or she can, if she is beautiful and talented, become one by mastering the sixty-four arts. Sternbach argues that it can be inferred from the Arthaśāstra that a *gaṇikā*'s daughter preferably also became a *gaṇikā*.¹⁵⁹ This is confirmed by the DKC, where the courtesan daughter Rāgamañjarī's family strongly objects to the idea that she should transgress her *svadharma* (own duty) and become a housewife.

5.1 The *svadharma* of the courtesan

A courtesan's duty, whether she is a government servant or a free courtesan, is to serve her clients with sexual services in exchange for money or other valuables. If she is the king's property, she has to yield her person to anybody, if ordered by the king. If she is a free courtesan, she can choose her clients as she wants.¹⁶⁰ However, both types of courtesans were duty-bound to yield to the man with whom an agreement had been made. The Arthaśāstra states that the fixed fine for refusing to fulfil their obligations, when the customer had paid the agreed price, is twice the amount of the agreed price.¹⁶¹ In the *Mṛcchakaṭikam*, the *viṭa* (a bon vivant) addresses Vasantasenā with these words: "Remember...that you, a courtesan are just like a creeper growing by the wayside. You possess a body that can be bought for money and

¹⁵⁷ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (6.5.1-39), 151-155.

¹⁵⁸ Sternbach, Ludwig, "Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra", 34-39.

¹⁵⁹ Sternbach, Ludwig, "Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra", 31.

¹⁶⁰ Sternbach, Ludwig, "Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra", 36.

¹⁶¹ Sternbach, Ludwig, "Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra", 41.

hence is like an article for sale. (Therefore), O good maiden, serve equally one much coveted by you and one disliked by you.”¹⁶²

The duties of a courtesan evolve around one theme: profit. As the maintainer of the family, the courtesan has to be concerned with money. If she disregards profit, and allows herself to indulge in a love relationship that brings no money, her whole household will suffer. The Kāmasūtra, when discussing the three goals of life – religion, wealth and pleasure – states: “...power, in the form of wealth, is the most important goal for a king...and for a courtesan”.¹⁶³ This fact is echoed in the Kuṭṭanīmatam where Vikarālā instructs the courtesan Mālātī:

Despise the man who brings no money, honour the man who has a solid fortune; our beauty is but nature’s tool for building riches, O fair innocent. If you amuse yourself by love with a handsome boy, and take no regard for profit, then you will be mocked, O beautiful, by all the troops of thoughtful prostitutes.¹⁶⁴

The courtesans were probably painfully aware of the fact that their earning power depended upon their beauty, and that they had to accumulate as much wealth as possible while they were young and attractive. The Kuṭṭanīmatam advises courtesans to be aware of the value of their youth: “When a harlot is a child she is good for nothing, when she is old she is good for even less, and the while between is very short: if in addition she be the slave of her passions, in the time of her useful youth, she will end on straw.”¹⁶⁵

14

*gaṇikāyāśca gamyaṃ prati sajjataiva na saṅgaḥ satyāmapī prītau na māturmātrkāyā
vā śāsanātivr̥ttiḥ*

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 2-4, p. 68)

A courtesan’s duty is readiness towards her customer and not attachment to him. Even if there is love, she must not disobey her mother or grandmother.

¹⁶² Kale, M. R., *The Mṛichchhakatika of Śūdraka*, 37.

¹⁶³ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (1.2.15), 9.

¹⁶⁴ Mathers, E. Powys, *Eastern Love, The Lessons of a Bawd of Damodaragupta*, 32.

¹⁶⁵ Mathers, E. Powys, *Eastern Love, The Lessons of a Bawd of Damodaragupta*, 64-65.

Kāmamañjarī's mother reminds her daughter that her duty is to be a professional courtesan. She must let her customer believe that she loves him, but she must not become attached to him. The mother admits that a young courtesan might fall in love, but she makes it clear that it is the mother and the grandmother who have the absolute control over her daughter and her sexuality. This line shows that in a courtesan household, where there is no father, the daughter is still under parental control.

15

evaṃ sthite 'nayā prajāpativihitaṃ svadharmamullaṅghya
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 4, p. 68)

Such was the settled practice, but she (my daughter) violated her own duty ordained by Prajāpati.

Kāmamañjarī is threatening to leave her profession as a courtesan and start a life as an ascetic. Her mother accuses her daughter of neglecting her courtesan duties. According to Kale, Prajāpati is identified with the god Brahma¹⁶⁶, who is the creator of all, including the individual's *svadharma* (one's own duties and rights). He is the same Prajāpati, who by his descendant Manu, created The Law Code of Manu.¹⁶⁷ However, there is no reference in The Law Code of Manu to a courtesan's *svadharma*.

The line above is ambiguous: On the one hand, it might be that Kāmamañjarī's mother's knowledge of mythology is insufficient, and that she is wrong in her claims that the customs of courtesans are ordained by Prajāpati, in the same way that Kāmamañjarī makes a few mistakes when she relates to Marīci stories on how easy a pious person can regain his purity after having given in to *kāma* (pleasure), for example in her reference to Tilottamā's seduction of Brahma.¹⁶⁸ On the other, Kāmamañjarī's mother might be right in referring to Prajāpati. The settled practice in a courtesan's household is that the courtesan practises her arts. That is her duty; it is not to become an ascetic. The Law Code of Manu states that a

¹⁶⁶ Kale, M.R, *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, 48.

¹⁶⁷ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu's Code of Law*, (1.32-36, 12.123), 88, 236.

¹⁶⁸ Tilottamā seduced Śiva, Indra, and many sages, but she did not seduce Brahma. Kale, M.R, *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, [45].

person should be faithful to his duties, as it is “better to carry out one’s own Law imperfectly than that of someone else’s perfectly”.¹⁶⁹

16

svakuṭumbakaṃ cāvasāditam

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 7, p. 68)

(She has) ruined her own household.

By abandoning her duties and running away from her obligations, Kāmamañjarī has put her household in a difficult situation. Her family has invested substantial resources in her education and upbringing, and they are dependent on a pay back on their investment when the courtesan starts her career. Without her income the family will soon be ruined.

17

sā cediya mahāryaniścayā srava eṣa jano’traivānanyagatiranaśanena saṃsthāsyata

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 8-9, p. 68)

If she (my daughter) proves unshaken in her resolve (to stay in the forest), then all these people, who have no other means of subsistence, will starve themselves to death, right here.

Kāmamañjarī is the family’s only upholder, as her younger sister, Rāgamañjarī, refuses to become a courtesan (see sentences 25 and 26). Without Kāmamañjarī’s income, her large family has no other choice than to stay in the forest and die by starvation. As Kāmamañjarī is a free courtesan, she cannot rely on support from the king for the maintenance of her household, thus the responsibility placed on her is enormous.

18

dvitīyastu sarvasyaiva sulabhaḥ kuladharmānuṣṭhāyinaḥ

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 12, p. 68)

¹⁶⁹ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (10.97), 213.

(And) the second (the attainment of heaven) is easy to obtain for anyone by simply fulfilling the duties of your family.

Marīci instructs Kāmamañjarī, who has come to his hermitage to seek happiness in the next world, in the importance of fulfilling one's own duties. In the same way as a wife may obtain salvation by following her *dharma* and serving her husband, so can the courtesan by fulfilling her duties.

25

*kiṃ tu sā kila vārakanyakā gaṇikāsvadharmapratīpagāminā bhadrodāreṇāśayena
samagirata*

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 13, p. 84 and lines 1-2, p. 85)

However, rumour has it that the courtesan maiden, with noble and generous thought that goes contrary to the proper duties of a courtesan, has declared:

26

*guṇaśulkā 'ham na dhanaśulkā na ca pāṇigrahaṇādṛte 'nyabhogyam yauvanam
(daśakumāracarita, chap. II, lines 2-3, p. 85)*

My bride-price will be counted in virtues, not riches, and my youth will not be enjoyed by another except by marriage.

Rāgamañjarī, the courtesan Kāmamañjarī's sister, aspires to become a housewife. She has not yet entered the profession of a courtesan, probably because she is too young. She is depicted as noble and generous, qualities that are proper to a wife, but may be an obstacle to a courtesan, whose prime concern should be profit. Her noble character is proved by her statement that she will not sell her youth for money. She will only give herself to the man who takes her hand in marriage. Her demand is that her husband is a virtuous man, not that he is rich.

The first of these two lines (sentence 25) confirms what is considered the proper duties of a courtesan: not to be generously inclined towards men, unless they are able to pay. Both lines implicitly value the state of being a married woman above that of being a courtesan,

because it is her good character that motivates her choice: good character is more natural to wives than to courtesans. In addition, by giving herself to a man who may not be rich, removes some of the stigma of the courtesan profession. In the *Mṛcchakaṭikam*, the courtesan Vasantasenā, when it is pointed out to her that her beloved is a poor man, says: “Hence it is that I love him. For a courtesan who fixes her affection on a poor lover would not incur censure from the world”.¹⁷⁰ By proving that she is not concerned with riches, the courtesan removes some of the mistrust connected to her profession.

27

*yadiyamatikramya svakuladharmamarthanirapekṣā guṇebhya eva svaṃ yauvanam
vicikrīṣate*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 6-7, p. 85)

She had so transgressed the duties of her family that she, quite regardless of wealth, wishes to sell her own youth for merits only.

Rāgamañjarī has neglected her family’s *dharma*, which is to provide for her family, by trading her body for money. By refusing to be a courtesan, she is also refusing to support her family and pay back her family’s investment in her education.

28

kulastrīṽṛttamevācyutamanutiṣṭāsati
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 8, p. 85)

Absolutely firm, she only wants to become a respectable housewife.

Rāgamañjarī wants to become a *kulastrī*. She wants to leave her *dharma*, in the same way as her sister Kāmamañjarī wanted, when she came to Marīci. The difference is that Rāgamañjarī honestly wants to become a housewife, while Kāmamañjarī was acting to gain money. With regard to *dharma*, the conversion from courtesan to wife may cause a religious

¹⁷⁰ Kale, M. R., *The Mṛichchhakaṭika of Śūdraka*, 71.

paradox: in aspiring to become a respectable woman, whose salvation depends on faithful devotion to one man (her husband), Rāgamañjarī is neglecting her family's *dharma*, which is regarded as immoral, but important to follow for the sake of salvation.

The question is whether it was possible for a woman of a courtesan family to become a respectable housewife. In the *Mṛcchakaṭikā*, Vasantasenā's lover, Cārudatta, was embarrassed when people find out that he has befriended a courtesan.¹⁷¹ He refuses to take her necklace into the inner chamber of his house "for it has been worn by a courtesan".¹⁷² At the end of the play, they received the king's permission to marry, and Cārudatta places the veil on Vasantasenā, to signify that she now is a married woman.¹⁷³ Will Vasantasenā, as a legally married wife, have access to the inner chamber? Or is she still considered impure because of her former profession?

However, the situation of Rāgamañjarī is different from that of Vasantasenā. Rāgamañjarī had never entered into the profession of a courtesan, and was thus probably still a virgin, which is, according to The Law Code of Manu, a prerequisite for becoming a proper wife (see chap. 3.3, sentence 10 and 43).

33

*prasṛtataraṃ ca sakhyaṃ mayā saha dhanamitrasya matparigrahaṭvaṃ ca
rāgamañjaryāḥ
(daśakumāracarita, chap. II, lines 9-10, p. 90)*

My friendship with Dhanamitra is well-known, and so are also my acceptance of Rāgamañjarī in marriage.

Apahāravarman confirms that he is going to marry Rāgamañjarī. This line is spoken when, mad by drunkenness, he was arrested for attacking the police. In order to get out of this critical situation, he shouts to Rāgamañjarī nurse, who had been following him, that it is the union of Dhanamitra and Rāgamañjarī that is the reason for his rage. He also pretends to have stolen Rāgamañjarī's jewellery. He accuses Rāgamañjarī of being a wretched courtesan,

¹⁷¹ Kale, M. R., *The Mṛichchhakaṭika of Śūdraka*, 329.

¹⁷² Kale, M. R., *The Mṛichchhakaṭika of Śūdraka*, 109.

¹⁷³ Kale, M. R., *The Mṛichchhakaṭika of Śūdraka*, 403.

greedy for wealth. The nurse, who knows how to take a hint, asks him to forgive Rāgamañjarī's only offence, and adds that a courtesan who lives by her looks is dependent upon her decorations. Although the conversation between Apahāravarman and the nurse is just an artifice and part of his plan to free himself, they are both playing on well-known perceptions of a courtesan's nature and her duty.

31

*naiṣa nyāyo veśakulasya yaddāturapadeśaḥ | na hyarthairnyāyārjitaireva puruṣā
veśamupatiṣṭhanti*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 12-13, p. 88)

It is improper for prostitutes to expose their patrons. After all, not every man who frequents prostitutes does so with honestly acquired money.

Kāmamañjarī's mother refuses to expose her daughter's clients to the king. She considers it her duty to protect her patrons. She admits that a courtesan is indifferent to how her client's money is obtained. The king is probably well aware of the fact that all sorts of men frequent a courtesan's house.

The Arthaśāstra states that it is the duty of a courtesan to inform the king about the men who spend time with her. The reason for this is that enemies of the king might hide in the house of prostitutes.¹⁷⁴

In these lines Kāmamañjarī's mother employs the word *veśa* twice, which indicates that she is speaking about what is improper for prostitutes in general. In the Arthaśāstra, the word *veśa* is used as a synonym to *veśya*, which is the designation of all women engaged in prostitution.¹⁷⁵

5.2 The status of the courtesan

The combination of being intellectual, artistic, and sexually available is the foundation for the courtesan's being a person of high esteem. As a keeper of culture and pleasure, she operates on an elite level of society, where she entertains extraordinary customers, such as kings and

¹⁷⁴ Sternbach, Ludwig, "Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra", 46.

¹⁷⁵ Sternbach, Ludwig, "Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra", 29.

Brahmins. She is indistinguishable from highborn ladies, and she assumes the same lifestyle and has much the same privileges as they do, even though she probably comes from lower strata of society.¹⁷⁶

The courtesan is a natural part of the king's court and his harem. Her status, in relation to other women in the king's harem, is alluded to in the Kāmasūtra: In the evening, when the king visits the harem, he goes first to his wives, then to the *punarbhavas* (widowed women), who probably served as concubines in the harem, then to the courtesans, and finally to the dancing girls. There he gives them attention according to the time they have served in the harem and their worth.¹⁷⁷ The courtesan's position in the harem is thus higher than that of the dancing girls, but lower than those of the wives and the widowed women.

Even though the courtesan was lauded and held in high esteem in many texts, there is evidence that she was also insulted and mistreated. In the DKC the courtesan Chandrasenā is forcibly held by prince Bhīmadhanvan.¹⁷⁸ In the Mṛcchakaṭikā, when the courtesan Vasantasenā had been rescued by a monk after she had been treated roughly by a man, she describes her condition as “[w]hat befits the profession of a courtesan”.¹⁷⁹

The Arthaśāstra supplies special rules on inheritance for courtesans, which are completely different from the rules that bind other people. Inheritance in the courtesan family is within the maternal line. When a *gaṇikā* dies, her daughters or her sisters inherit her belongings. If there are no daughters or sisters, her mother is entitled to inheritance.¹⁸⁰

11

*tamekadā kāmamañjarī nāmāṅgapurīvataṃsasthānīyā vārayuvatir ... sanirvedam
abhyetya ...*

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 7, p. 65)

One day a young courtesan called Kāmamañjarī (bouquet of love), the ornament of the Aṅga-capital, approached him.

¹⁷⁶ Feldman, Martha and Bonnie Gordon, ed., *The Courtesan's Arts, Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5-6.

¹⁷⁷ Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (4.2.58-61), 102.

¹⁷⁸ Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, 149-150.

¹⁷⁹ Kale, M. R., *The Mṛichchhakaṭikā of Śūdraka*, 303.

¹⁸⁰ Sternbach, Ludwig, “Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra”, 40.

Marīci refers to Kāmamañjarī as the *aṅgapurīvataṃsasthānīyā* (ornament of the capital of Aṅga), an epithet that reflects her high position in the city. Similar expressions are also found in the *Mṛcchakaṭikā* where Vasantasenā is described as *nagarasya vibhūṣaṇaṃ*¹⁸¹ (ornament of the city) and *nagaraśrī* (treasure or good fortune of the city)¹⁸².

20

*hṛṣṭena ca rājñā mahārhai ratnālaṃkārairmahatā ca paribarheṇānugṛhya viśṛṣṭā
vāramukhyābhiḥ pauramukhyaiśca gaṇaśaḥ praśasyamānā
(daśakumāracarita, chap. II, lines 5-7, p. 72)*

She (Kāmamañjarī) was sent away by the happy king who had favoured her with jewelled ornaments of great value and a large retinue, and was also applauded by crowds of prominent courtesans and principal citizens.

Kāmamañjarī is honoured with gifts and other valuables after she has managed to seduce Marīci. The bet on whether she would succeed was originally between Kāmamañjarī and another courtesan, but it is the king who favours her with valuable gifts. This line confirms that superior courtesans associate with kings and other prominent people, and that they are respected and honoured by them.

22

*navapurvasu vā puṃstvamūlan api tu prakṛṣṭagaṇikāprārthyayauvāno hi yaḥ sa
pumān
(daśakumāracarita, chap. II, lines 7-8, p. 74)*

Neither form nor wealth is the test of manliness, but he alone is a man whose youth would be desired by the most superior courtesan.

23

ato yuvatīlālāmbhūtā kāmamañjarī yaṃ vā kāmāyate sa haratu subhagapatākām

¹⁸¹ Kale, M. R., *The Mṛichchhakaṭikā of Śūdraka*, 276.

¹⁸² Kale, M. R., *The Mṛichchhakaṭikā of Śūdraka*, 294.

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 8-9, p. 74)

Let him, whom Kāmamañjarī, the jewel among young women, chooses for her love have the banner of good fortune.

To be desired by an accomplished courtesan heightens a man's status. The positive influence bestowed by a courtesan is confirmed by the *Dhūrtaviṭasaṃvāda*, a play by Īśvaradatta from the fifth to sixth century AD. It states that a man gains "self confidence, heroism, ready wit, elegant pose, brilliance of spirit, knowledge of psychology and an acquaintance with the arts by attaching himself to a courtesan."¹⁸³

This line supports the view that a courtesan's company is precious and to be strived for. She is described as a valuable ornament and as a symbol of good luck.

29

*kāmamañjaryapi katipayairevāhobhiraśṣmantakaśeṣamajinaratnadohāśayā
svamabhyudayamakarot*

(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 9-10, p. 87)

Within a few days, Kāmamañjarī also reduced her large fortune to the ashes of a hearth, in anticipation of milking the precious bag.

Kāmamañjarī, who earlier is depicted as cunning and clever, has been conquered. Not by a man, or any other being, but by her own greed.

30

deva yeyaṃ gaṇikā kāmamañjarī lobhotkarṣāllobhamañjarīti...
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 11-12, p. 87)

Your Majesty, the courtesan Kāmamañjarī, because of her excessive greed, has been nicknamed Lobhamañjarī (Bouquet of greed)...

¹⁸³ *Dhūrtaviṭasaṃvāda* quoted in Kaul, Shonaleeka, "Woman about Town: An Exploration of the Sanskrit *Kāvya* Tradition", 63.

Again there is a reference to the courtesan's inordinate greed. The courtesan's concern with money is often depicted in texts as greed, and it might well, in many instances, have been a fair description. However, the courtesan's market value is influenced by her wealth. Based on the Arthaśāstra, Sternbach says: "Jewelry was one of the objects which added to the value and esteem of the *gaṇikā* and was considered as a tool necessary for gaining subsistence by them."¹⁸⁴ Thus, to secure a good earning power, a courtesan, who might be the only provider in the family, had to have a substantial collection of jewellery. For the courtesan, this might be a vicious circle, where one negative thing leads to another and aggravates the first. Her eagerness to earn money, to be able to buy jewellery, by which she is able to sustain or increase her income, might easily cause her to seem greedy.

32

tasyaivadravyāṇāṃ tu kenacidavayavena sā varākī kāmamañjarī
carmaratnamṛgaṭṭṣṇikāpavidddhasarvasvā sānukampaṃ dhanmitrābhinoditena
bhupenānvagrhyata
(daśakumāracarita, chap. II, lines 5-7, p. 89)

Unlucky Kāmamañjarī had given away everything she owned for the mirage of the precious bag. But prompted by Dhanamitra, the king took pity on her and granted her a portion of his (Arthapati's) property.

The precious bag is a purse that allegedly will yield riches, on the condition that the owner returns everything that has been taken from others. Kāmamañjarī has thus ruined herself in order to become more wealthy. However, the king feels responsible for her wellbeing and gives her some of Arthapati's property.

This line again confirms that there is a close connection between kings and courtesans. One can, however, question if it was pity that was the driving force of the king. It is in the king's interest that a free courtesan is able to carry on with her business, as her income would be taxed by the king.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Sternbach, Ludwig, "Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra", 39.

¹⁸⁵ Sternbach, Ludwig, "Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra", 28-30, 35 (note).

45

tasyāstu sakhī candrasenā nāma dhātreyikā mama priyā''sīt
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 16-17, p. 149)

Her (princess Kandukāvati's) friend and foster sister Chandrasenā, was my beloved.

Chandrasenā, who is a courtesan, is brought up together with the princess. She might even be the princess's stepsister, as her mother obviously is a courtesan in the king's harem. If her mother had just been a courtesan in the king's service, she would have had her own residence¹⁸⁶, and Chandrasenā would probably not have been presented as the princess's foster sister.

48

so 'yamartho viditabhāvayā mayā svamātre tayā ca tanmātre mahiṣyā ca
manujendrāya nivedayiṣyate
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 5-6, p. 154)

This situation will be reported by me, who know her feelings, to my mother, by her to her (princess Kandukāvati's) mother, and by the queen to the king.

Chandrasenā's close connection with the harem can also be inferred from the fact that Chandrasenā's mother acts as a messenger when she wants to pass on information to the queen. Chandrasenā's mother must therefore have been in the circle around the queen.

59

tatra kaścitkulaputraḥ kalāsu gaṇikāsu cātiraktaḥ
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 2-3, p. 167)

There lived a son of good family addicted to the fine arts and to courtesans.

¹⁸⁶ Sternbach, Ludwig, "Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra", 34.

A man who is attracted to the fine arts may find the company of a courtesan particularly pleasing. This line confirms that among the courtesan's clients, there are men from the upper level of society.

5.3 Dangerous and powerful women

The courtesan's intellect and skills, combined with her urge for money, makes her a powerful and potentially dangerous woman. Shah argues that the courtesan's control over her own money "masculinised" her.¹⁸⁷ This view is supported by the *Mṛcchakaṭikam*, where Cārudatta says: *arthataḥ puruṣo nārī yā nārī sā 'rthataḥ pumān* (Through [the absence of] money, a man becomes a woman; and she who is a woman becomes a man, also through [the possession of] money).¹⁸⁸

19

*niśamyaitanniyatibalānnu tatpāṭavānnu svabuddhimāndyānnu svaniyamamanāḍṛtya
tasyāmasau prāsajat
(daśakumāracarita, chap. II, lines 8-9, p. 71)*

Whether owing to the power of destiny, or to her eloquence, or to the infirmity of his own mind, hearing this (Kāmamañjarī's praising words of *kāma*) he (Marīci) became attached to her and disregarded his own vows.

The courtesan had tremendous power owing to her looks, knowledge and rhetorical skills. While Kāmamañjarī was staying in Marīci's hermitage, she used her abilities to make Marīci fall in love with her. She dressed herself in plain clothes, and full of counterfeit deep devotion she collected flowers for the worship of the deities. She also danced, sang and played, all for the propitiation of Śiva, and within a short while the ṛṣi (sage) fell for her. In addition, she elaborated on the importance of *dharma* as opposed to *artha* and *kāma*.

That a courtesan is clever in speech is well known from literary sources. Sternbach quotes a verse that illustrates this: "In the presence of a sovereign, among scholars and on

¹⁸⁷ Shah, Shalini, "In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries", 138.

¹⁸⁸ Kale, M. R., *The Mṛichchhakaṭika of Śūdraka*, 128,129.

meeting with the courtesans even an eloquent man is embarrassed for fear intimidates his heart.”¹⁸⁹

If it was infirmity of mind that made Marīci fall in love with Kāmamañjarī, then what was the trigger? Marīci was fully aware that she was a courtesan. Moreover, her mother had told him that she was well educated in all the different arts. Could it be that her willingness to give up her independence attracted him and finally made him fall?

21

svaśaktiniṣikṭaṃ rāgam uddhṛtya tayaiva bandhakyā mahadvairāgyamarpitam
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 16, p. 72 and line 1 p. 73)

And this whore, after she had removed the passion instilled in me by her power, has now given me absolute dispassion.

After Marīci had been deceived and seduced by Kāmamañjarī, he no longer refers to her in approving terms. He now calls her as a *bandhakī*. In M. Monier-Williams’ dictionary the word *bandhakī* is translated as “connected with many men, an unchaste woman, harlot, courtesan.”¹⁹⁰ Nicole Namouchi states:

...bhandakī wird in den altindischen Texten rein als Schimpfwort gebraucht, vor allem gegenüber Frauen, die keine Prostituierten sind. Die Übersetzung mit "Hure" ist hier am treffendsten [sic], da "Hure" im deutschen Sprachgebrauch auch als abwertendes Schimpfwort gegenüber Frauen im Allgemeinen verwendet wird.¹⁹¹

Marīci’s utterance may reflect a view on women that is moulded by the patriarchal mentality. When a woman is useful, or desired by a man, she is praised, but when she asserts herself, or puts an end to their relationship, she is despised. When Kāmamañjarī devoted herself entirely to Marīci and his project, and transferred the control of her life to him, she was loveable, but when she retrieved it, he refers to her using the abusive term “whore”.

¹⁸⁹ Ludwik Sternbach, *Veśyā: Synonyms and Aphorisms*, vol. 5: 16, quoted in Shah, Shalini, “In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries”, 142.

¹⁹⁰ Monier-Williams, Monier, *A Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, 721.

¹⁹¹ Namouchi, Nicole, *Käufliche Liebe: Prostitution im alten Indien*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lange GmbH, 1995), 14.

*subhagaṃmanyena ca mayāsvadhanasya svagr̥hasya svagaṇasya svadehasya
svajīvitasyaca saiveśvarīkṛtā kṛtaścāhamanayā malamallakaśeṣaḥ
(daśakumāracarita, chap. II, lines 13-14, p. 74)*

Imagining myself lucky, I made her mistress of my wealth, my home, my people, my body, and my very life. All she left me was my loincloth.

In this line Vasupālita plays on the common notion that a courtesan is greedy and untrustworthy, and that profit, not real love, is a courtesan's object. In the Kāmasūtra several *sūtras* are dedicated to ways to get money from a paramour and ways to get rid of him.¹⁹²

But why should Vasupālita feel victimised by Kāmamañjarī, when he initially knew that she was a courtesan whose profession is to sell her company and services for money? Why did he put the blame for his naivety on her?

In the Kuṭṭanīmatam, the old bawd says: "As for those fools who feel, in the very embraces of joyful girl, nought but the hurt to their purses, ask them if a lawful wife costs nothing to feed and clothe."¹⁹³ In other words, a courtesan's client should acknowledge that she needs her income to sustain herself and her family.

*dviṣadbhiḥ prakhyāpito 'si tasmīnstvayyuparate yadyahaṃ jīveyaṃ nṛśaṃso veśa
(daśakumāracarita, chap. VI, lines 12-13, p. 150)*

If I were to live after you were dead, I would be confirming the saying that a prostitute is fatal to men.

The courtesan Chandrasenā states that it is a common belief that prostitutes are dangerous to men. She is using the word *veśa*, which indicates that she is making a general statement about women who trades their bodies.

¹⁹² Doniger, Wendy and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Mallanaga Kamasutra*, (6.3.1-6.3.44), 142-147.

¹⁹³ Mathers, E. Powys, *Eastern Love, The Lesssons of a Bawd of Damodaragupta*, 59.

Again, the underlying attitude for this belief is that innocent men can be exploited by the blameworthy courtesan. When men are fascinated by and desirous of a courtesan, whose main duty is to profit, the blame for the consequences gets put on the object of their fascination.

47

sāyaṃ copasṛtya candrasenā rahasi
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 13, p. 153)

In the evening Chandrasenā approached us in secret.

In contrast to respectable women, a courtesan is free to move around as she likes. Her freedom of movement empowers her, because it gives her the freedom of choice. When she visits public places, such as gardens and festival sites, she can choose among men who seek her favours, and competing rivals may push up the price for her services.¹⁹⁴

She is, however, not free from danger when she walks alone, particularly not after dark. Therefore, the Arthaśāstra offers rules to protect prostitutes from being violated by watchmen during the night. This rule is strict and applicable to watchmen only, as they were the prostitute's only protection during the night. The Arthaśāstra states that for violating a *rūpājīvā* (woman who lives by her beauty) he shall be fined with 12 *paṇa*. Even if this penalty was high, it was nothing compared to the penalty for violating a *kulastrī* (highborn lady), which was death.¹⁹⁵

5.4 *Gaṇikāmāṭṛ* - the great matriarch

The courtesan's household can be seen as an inverted version of the patriarchal home. It differs from the patriarchal households surrounding it by being strictly matrilineal, as the female offspring remain living in the mother's house. Shah argues that "the household is the

¹⁹⁴ Shah, Shalini, "In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries", 150.

¹⁹⁵ Sternbach, Ludwig, "Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra", 50-51.

arena in which gender relations are structured and maintained.”¹⁹⁶ In the house of a courtesan, the livelihood is supplied by women, and the protector and head of the family is a woman.

In the courtesan’s household, the birth of a daughter is celebrated, because the welfare of the whole family depends on the continuous earning power of their young women. The birth of a boy, on the other hand, is of little use to the family. The low value of a son is reflected in the *Kuṭṭanīmatam*: *duhitara eva ślāghyā dhig lokam putrajanmasamtuṣṭam* (only daughters are praiseworthy; shame upon those who rejoice in the birth of a son).¹⁹⁷ This view is totally different from views normally held in ancient India, where the birth of a son was a necessity for the father’s salvation.¹⁹⁸ The *Arthaśāstra* too, points to the low value set on the son of a *gaṇikā*, by denying him the right of inheritance from his mother.¹⁹⁹ In the *Mṛcchakaṭikam* the sons of courtesans, here referred to as *bandhulas* (bastards), explains who they are: *paragr̥halalitāḥ parānnapuṣṭāḥ parapuruṣairjanitāḥ parānaganāsu | paradhananiratā guṇeṣvavācyā gajakalabhā iva bandhulā lalāmaḥ* (we are, indeed, *bandhulas*, that sport about like cubs of elephants, being reared in other people’s houses, fed on others’ food, begotten by other men upon stranger-women, enjoying others’ riches, and possessing no [particular] merits to speak of.”²⁰⁰ In contrast to the patriarchal home, where children belong to the father (see chap. 3.4, sentence 42), in the courtesan’s household they are entirely under the mother’s control.²⁰¹

The head of the courtesan household is the *gaṇikāmātr* (courtesan’s mother). She can either be a real mother, or she can be adopted by the *gaṇikā*. In some texts she is referred to as *kuṭṭanī* (bawd). It is clear that a *gaṇikā* is dependent upon her mother, real or adopted, to take care of her financial matters and for the organization of her household, which might be quite large. In the DKC, when Kāmamañjarī pretends to seek refuge in Marīci’s hermitage, numerous people of her household follow her: *mātrpramukhas tadāptavargah*²⁰² (a crowd of relatives headed by the mother). A courtesan’s mother is also her protection against the

¹⁹⁶ Shah, Shalini, “In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries”, 127.

¹⁹⁷ *Kuṭṭanīmatam* quoted in Sternbach, Ludwig, “Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya’s *Arthaśāstra*”, 31.

¹⁹⁸ Olivelle, Patrick, *Manu’s Code of Law*, (9.139), 197.

¹⁹⁹ Sternbach, Ludwig, “Legal Position of Prostitutes According to Kauṭilya’s *Arthaśāstra*”, 40.

²⁰⁰ Kale, M. R., *The Mṛcchakaṭika of Śūdraka*, 162,163.

²⁰¹ Shah, Shalini, “In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries”, 127.

²⁰² Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, line 9, 65.

different men who surround her. Shah argues that it is the presence of the *kuṭṭanī* that prevents a courtesan from becoming “an object of exchange between the pimp and the clients.”²⁰³

The *gaṇikāmātr*, or *kuṭṭanī*, is a well known stereotype in Sanskrit literature, often depicted as old, ugly, cruel, and greedy. The *Kuṭṭanīmatam* describes her thus: an old woman with few teeth and a pug nose; her belly has soft and bloated flesh; her eyes are sunken, under their fallen lids; her rare white hair drops on to her neck, which is ploughed with a knot of veins.²⁰⁴ She is also described as “a river filled with crocodiles from which it is best to stay away”.²⁰⁵ However, the frequent caricaturing of the *gaṇikāmātr* cannot conceal the fact that she must be a well qualified and acknowledged leader. She is well educated and in addition, she is a woman of experience. Her own experience combined with the accumulated knowledge gathered from generations of courtesans, makes her a powerful expert in her field.

12

*bhagavan, asyā me doṣameṣā vo dāsī vijñāpayati doṣaśca mama
svādhikārānuṣṭāpanam
(daśakumāracarita, chap. II, lines 1-2, p. 66)*

Your holiness, your humble slave is bringing before you my offence against her (my daughter, Kāmamañjarī); my fault lies in making her perform the duties of her proper profession.

Kāmamañjarī’s mother refers to her daughter’s duties, and she is implicitly drawing attention to her own, which is to facilitate her daughter’s business and manage her household.

13

*eṣa hi gaṇikāmāturadhikāro yad ...
(daśakumāracarita, chap. II, lines 2-3, p. 66)*

This is the duty of the mother of a courtesan: ...

²⁰³ Shah, Shalini, “In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries”, 131.

²⁰⁴ Mathers, E. Powys, *Eastern Love, The Lessons of a Bawd of Damodaragupta*, 3.

²⁰⁵ Dhūrta-viṭa Saṁvāda quoted in Shah, Shalini, “In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries”, 131.

Kāmamañjarī's mother lists her duties as a *gaṇikāmātrī*: to take care of her physical needs and develop her beauty, to instruct her in erotic science in all its branches; to give her training in the arts of dance, song, music, acting, painting, as well as the culinary arts and in the art of preparing flowers, to teach her reading, writing and how to express herself with eloquence. Furthermore she should to teach her some grammar, logic and astrology, and make her adept in the art of earning a living, in amusement, and in the art of gambling.

In addition to this list, which is closely derived from Kāmasūtra, her mother must make sure that her daughter receives practical instruction, by reliable people, in the secrets of sexual science, and at the proper time introduce her to the public. She must also oversee her work, and make sure that her customers pay the highest possible price.²⁰⁶

6 Conclusion

In order to understand the dual concept of femaleness, which seems to prevail in the classical Sanskrit literature, a number of sources have been explored. The main text has been the DKC, which has been studied both as a source of different attitudes held towards women, and as a source of knowledge about women's options for power and control of their lives. The text has thus been treated as a source of socio-historical knowledge. One of the aims of the analysis has been to explore whether attitudes towards women, as they explicitly and implicitly have been expressed in the DKC, conform to those expressed in other texts.

The analysis has been structured into three themes: female nature, the wife, and the courtesan, each of them analysed in the light of norms of proper female behaviour supplied by The Law Code of Manu. Furthermore, these themes have been studied in view of the Kāmasūtra and the Arthaśāstra. Other texts, such as the Mṛcchakaṭikā, the Kuṭṭanīmatam, and the Mahābhārata, have also contributed to shed light on the twofold notion of femaleness.

Notions on female nature underlie and support attitudes to women. It has been claimed that women's subordinated position in the patriarchal society may be explained by the belief that females are more nature, or uncultured, than men. This notion is largely based on the female physiology and bodily functions, which were the bases for concepts of purity and impurity, and which ultimately excluded women from positions of power. It has been shown

²⁰⁶ Kale, M.R., *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, 46-47.

that this claim was supported by The Law Code of Manu, which warns Brahmins of the polluting effect of menstruating women and of women who recently have given birth.

In the DKC women are often compared to nature, but never in a negative way. It is nature's positive qualities, such as beauty, fertility and bountifulness, which are expressly attributed to women; no concepts of purity or impurity are explicitly stated. However, such notions may be inferred from the text, particularly with regard to widows and women separated from their husbands. Kāntimatī gets the king's permission to commit *satī* after her husband's death, in order to spare her family the disgrace of her unfortunate widowhood. The *yakṣī* Tārāvalī, who was cursed to be separated from her husband, displayed the same outer signs of inauspiciousness as a widow; an emaciated body and worn out cloths.

The Law Code of Manu, which may be seen as representing patriarchal values and concerns, describes female nature in a rather negative way. Not only does the law book describe women as lustful, cruel, fickle, and badly behaved, it also claims that these traits are assigned to them by Prajāpati, the Lord of Creation. The DKC, on the other hand, does not ascribe these attributes to any of the female characters in the tale, neither does it moralize about female behaviour. However, Mitragupta, one of the male heroes, relates the story of Dhūminī, a woman who manifests many of the negative traits listed by The Law Code of Manu, and who behaves in ways contrary to those of a good wife. Furthermore, on two occasions women in the tale are tested on these undesirable qualities. It may thus be inferred that it was a common view that female nature was likely to contain certain malevolent traits.

Furthermore, patriarchy has to protect itself against the possible evil effects of female nature. This concern might explain why the rules and regulations in The Law Code of Manu always advance male interests. The Law recommends strict control of women, throughout their lives, to safeguard the stability of the family and the society. As seen from the analysis above, the rules for proper female behaviour limited a woman's freedom of movement, as well as regulated and controlled her sexuality. Furthermore, rules on inheritance and ownership of property minimised her options of economical independence.

The importance of controlling women may explain why The Law Code of Manu declares marriage to be the primary goal of women. In marriage the ownership of a woman, and the duty to control her, are transferred from her father to her husband. Marriage is the only means for a *kulastrī* to live a respectable life and to attain salvation. Furthermore, The Law Code of Manu states that a woman's questionable character may be transformed by the wedding rites, as she takes on her husband's (good) characters in marriage.

The importance of marriage is clearly stated in the DKC, although there is no indication of a transformation of character. Marriages are normally arranged by the father, but there are instances where both men and women make their own choice of marriage partner. The DKC confirms that it is a father's duty to give his daughter in marriage to a man of good quality. It also contains instances where a father has given his daughter as a gift of gratitude, or as a trophy of war.

The analysis of rules and concepts pertaining to the wife shows that from a male perspective, she is a benevolent force as long as she conforms to the regulations imposed upon her. Without the wife's voluntary or forced subjugation to her husband, the social system of the patriarchy would not survive. It has been shown that The Law Code of Manu contains several rules that regulate the life of the wife and thus secures male supremacy.

A wife was not free to move about as she wanted. The Law Code of Manu states that moving outside the house is one of the things that corrupt women. It was even seen as shameful for a woman to be seen outside her home without a guardian. This view is confirmed by the Arthaśāstra, which allows highborn ladies to spin and weave for the king's factories in their own houses, in order to protect their reputation. It can be inferred from the DKC that strict control of women's movements is important, and that respectable ladies normally yielded to their husband's control. Nitambavatī, who is a lady of high birth, is initially reluctant to leave her house unguarded. However, she is framed by a stranger and leaves her house on her own. This proves to be dangerous, with the result that she is expelled by her husband. The story of Nitambavatī may serve as a warning against violating the rules of proper behaviour.

Marriage at an early age was a recommended means to exercise control over women's sexuality, and to safeguard the young bride's virginity. The importance of the bride being a virgin is clearly stated in The Law Code of Manu. It is a father's duty to inform about possible defects in the bride, and a girl who has lost her virginity is a defective bride. The emphasis placed on virginity reflects the importance of a man to being sure that the children are his. The DKC too, emphasises the need to guard the virginity of young girls. Princess Maṇikarnikā was placed as a child in an underground palace to protect her from being corrupted by men, and a Brahmin's "daughter" was trusted to the king for his protection, because her father found it difficult to control a girl without a mother.

The Law Code of Manu tells women to never act independently, and to always remain under the control of men. A wife's dependency upon her husband is secured by denying her rights to inheritance, as well as ownership of property and the right to dispose of her own

income. Women's wealth is only briefly touched upon in the DKC. On only two occasions are economical resources mentioned: once when Gominī is described as a girl who has lost both her parents and her wealth, and once when queen Kalpasundarī refers to her own great wealth as a means to install her lover in her husband's place.

The Law Code of Manu states explicitly that a wife is a blessing on account of her fertility and her ceaseless service to her husband. She is the field in which her husband's children are produced. The importance of a son is immense in the patriarchal society. If she fails to beget at least one son, her husband's and his forefather's happiness in the afterlife are in danger. The Law Code of Manu states that a wife who bears no son can legally be deserted after eleven years. Even when she is deserted or widowed, she is expected to remain faithful to her husband for as long as she lives. A husband, on the other hand, is encouraged by The Law Code of Manu to take a new wife if his first wife is barren or dies. The question of issues is no theme for the heroes in the DKC. The reason may be that they are all quite young and still occupied with their *digvijaya* (conquest of various countries in all directions) and their love affairs.

A good wife's foremost duty is unwavering lifelong devotion to her husband, regardless of his character. The husband, on the contrary, may expel a wife and take another one if she as much as speaks in a way that displeases him. The Kāmasūtra gives a detailed description on how a devoted wife should behave towards her husband. With regard to the serving and pleasing aspects of the wife's duties, the Kāmasūtra is in complete agreement with The Law Code of Manu. However, the Kāmasūtra does not demand of a wife that she shall worship her husband as a god, when he is bereft of good qualities. The way the good wife is described in the DKC is to a large extent in accordance with The Law Code of Manu and the Kāmasūtra. The story of Gominī elaborates all the good qualities of a *pativrata*. She is humble, modest, clever at housekeeping, and she loyally serves her husband as a god, even when he amuses himself with a courtesan. She never questions her husband's morality, and she finds it natural to place her husband's need above her own. Ratnavatī, the wife who was abandoned by her husband because she thoughtlessly had offended him, strives to get her husband back so that she can fulfil her duty as a wife and be of service to him. Ironically, it was her concern with being a good wife that caused Nitambavatī to be accused of being a demon, and finally be expelled by her husband. Because she was childless and eager to bestow a child upon her husband, she transgressed her duties of not leaving the house without his permission. Kalpasundarī, on the other hand, is depicted in a way that goes contrary to the

norms of a faithful and virtuous wife. She dislikes her husband, and refuses to respect him, and she even initiates a meeting with her lover who later kills her husband.

For a wife, even her salvation is dependent on her service to her husband. Because she is denied knowledge of the Vedas, and implicitly the right to live and study with a guru, her only option for a happy afterlife is to serve her husband as her deity. On the other hand, if she is unfaithful, she will be disgraced in this world, be afflicted with diseases, and in her next life she will be reborn as a jackal.

It has been shown that a *kulastrī* has few options of power over her life. She is restricted with regard to her movements, she is economically dependent, and sexually controlled. Her source of power lies in the patriarchy's need for the sexual purity of the wife, which guarantees the pure lineage of the husband. In the DKC, the story of Ratnavatī illustrates the desperation of a woman who has been left by her husband. Ratnavatī has no other options for a respectable life than to win her husband back.

Even though men seem to take great care in controlling women, several women in the DKC are depicted as clever in circumventing male control. Princess Kanakalekhā smuggles Mantragupta into her apartment, and queen Kalpasundarī sneaks away to meet her lover Upahāvarman in the garden. While The Law Code of Manu continuously emphasises the importance of women being virtuous, and warns against the consequences of infidelity, the DKC does not describe the women who transgress the law book's norms as immoral. On the contrary, the quest for pleasure seems to be also acknowledged for women, at least when it benefits the heroes of the tale. On this point, the DKC is in agreement with the Kāmasūtra, whose main concern is pleasure and erotic love for both men and women.

In striking contrast to the controlled, uneducated and virtuous wife, is the uncontrolled, accomplished, and sexually unrestricted courtesan. She is free to move about as she likes, and she is economically independent of one man. While the *pativratā* is solely benevolent, the *gaṇikā* is potentially dangerous, and might be a threat to patriarchal values. It is thus important for patriarchy that the world of the wife and the world of the courtesan are kept separate. As seen from the analysis, notions of impurity with regard to the *gaṇikā*, which are emphasised in The Law Code of Manu, may be used to serve this end. The ambiguity in attitudes with regard to the courtesan may arise from two conditions: the courtesan is desirable because of her beauty, knowledge, and sexual availability, but she is not willing to be had for free. Since her main object is profit, a man can never feel confident with regards to her affection; because she can easily dispose of him for the advantage of a wealthier rival.

The courtesan's *svadharma* is dealt with in detail in the analysis. While there is no mention of the courtesan's duties in The Law Code of Manu, other texts such as the Kāmasūtra, the Kuṭṭanīmatam, and the Arthaśāstra, elaborate on this subject. The texts agree upon the courtesan's duty to be available to the clients and her duty to charge for her services. Furthermore, as the courtesan's education and upbringing is expensive, it is expected that she will support her family when she is old enough to enter her career as a courtesan. In the DKC, Kāmamañjarī's mother accuses her daughter of neglecting her duties, when she takes refuge in Marīci's hermitage. She reminds Kāmamañjarī that her duty is readiness towards her customer, and the financial support of her family. It is obvious that her daughter's income is vital to her family, because without it her whole family will starve. Furthermore, because the courtesan household is dependent upon the daughters' income, the mother objects to her second daughter, Rāgamañjarī, aspirations to become a housewife. She argues that it is wealth, not love, which is a courtesan's proper object.

Both the Arthaśāstra and the Kāmasūtra state that a *gaṇikā* is held in high esteem on account of her beauty and accomplishment. Other texts, like the Kuṭṭanīmatam and the Mṛcchakaṭikam, impart nuances to this view by explicitly stating that it is shameful to be associated with a courtesan. The DKC confirms the high status of the courtesan; Kāmamañjarī is praised for being the ornament of the city, her favours are sought after, and it is considered good fortune and a proof of manliness to be desired by her. There is nothing in the DKC to support the view that a courtesan's company may bring disgrace. On the contrary, Kāmamañjarī is shown to be worthy of the honour of both the king and other eminent people. However, it is stated that it is a common view that a courtesan may bring about a man's downfall.

It is the courtesan's intelligence, knowledge, and desire for money, combined with the fact that her sexuality is beyond male control, which make her powerful and potentially dangerous to men. The Mṛcchakaṭikam links the courtesan's power to her wealth, by stating that she may be regarded a man on account of her money. The DKC clearly depicts the dangerous aspect of the courtesan. Marīci fell in love with Kāmamañjarī, and neglects his vows, because she uses her great skills to seduce him. Similarly, Vasupālita loses all his wealth because he entrusts it to Kāmamañjarī, whom he believes to be in love with him. On the other hand, Rāgamañjarī, who is willing to transfer the control of her sexuality to a husband, is depicted as having noble and generous thoughts that go contrary to the duties of a courtesan.

The courtesans' concern with money has earned her a reputation of being greedy. The Kuṭṭanīmatam rationalizes why a courtesan must pay attention to profit; she simply needs to supply herself and her family with food and clothing. The DKC does not seem to acknowledge that earning money is the practical side of a courtesan's profession, and it gives a rather biased picture of her as obsessed with money. It depicts Kāmamañjarī as exceedingly greedy by pointing out that she has tapped her client, Vasupālita, for his wealth. She has also ruined herself in order to milk a magical purse for riches.

Compared to the wife, the courtesan may be conceived of as a woman in control of her own life, an impression that to a certain extent is correct. A courtesan is free to move about, she can build up her own wealth, and she has the right to own property. However, with regard to her sexuality, the *gaṇikā* has to yield to the control of her mother, who is the head of her matriarchal household. It might seem as if the courtesan has autonomy, but it is the *gaṇikāmātr* who had real power. The *gaṇikāmātr* facilitates the courtesan's education, she introduces her into the marketplace, and she makes sure that her daughter receives the highest price possible. The *gaṇikāmātr* is both feared and respected. As a former courtesan, she has an extensive education and is experienced in her profession. Her knowledge spans from how to manage the family business, to efficient methods for making stingy customers pay. The important position of the *gaṇikāmātr* is confirmed by the DKC. In the story of Marīci, Kāmamañjarī's mother gives a detailed description on her duties as the mother of a courtesan. She also makes it clear that her authority is unquestionable, and that her daughter must never disobey either her mother or her grandmother.

The wife/courtesan dichotomy creates a patriarchal dilemma, so to speak. The dilemma is caused by the norms of proper conduct, which patriarchy imposes upon women, and which divide females into sexually pure or sexually degraded women. While men need the domestic services and children provided by the protected and pure wife, they also want the intellectual stimuli and sexual pleasure provided by the beautiful courtesan. To rationalise their need for both types of women, men have described in different ways prostitution as a safety valve which serves them, and by implication the family and society. The patriarchal attitude which views prostitution as a necessary evil is echoed in male texts such as the

Kuṭṭanīmatam, which states that “sex with the wife is necessary for the sake of progeny and intercourse with a prostitute for avoiding sickness (vyādhi), i.e., excessive sexual desire.”²⁰⁷

The wife and the courtesan represent two archetypes in ancient Indian literature. They belong to mutually exclusive spheres, and cater to male needs in totally different ways. The two types of women have been compared in the analogy of a chariot and a bullock cart²⁰⁸, a statement which alludes to the beauty and refinement of the courtesan, and the purity and plainness of the wife. The irony is that the courtesan, who is shared by many men, and whose sexuality is a means for profit, exercises a greater power than that of the pure and protected wife.

It has been shown that the female characters in the DKC differ in many ways from the norms of proper behaviour stated in The Law Code of Manu. The DKC seems to take a more liberal view of female behaviour than that of the law book, as it often depicts women as active in initiating and facilitating a love relationship. In this way women are portrayed as more or less equal partners. Furthermore, both men and women are easily affected by emotions, and tend to fall in love at first sight. However, women are also objectified. It is pointed out in the analysis that Queen Vasumatī is compared to the earth, and as such she can implicitly be conquered and mastered by the king.

Although women in the tale may employ clever tricks to make the man they desire fall for them, they are never depicted as behaving improperly. The only woman who is portrayed as immoral is Dhūminī. She is, however, no character in the text, but rather a figure used to illustrate the hardheartedness of women.

While the reader of the DKC is made familiar with the thoughts and emotional states of the heroes in the tale, very little is revealed of the female characters' emotions and aspirations. The only exception is Kalpasundarī, who explains in great detail what she feels about her husband, why she is disappointed by him, and implicitly what kind of qualities she would like her husband to have.

The attitudes toward the female characters in the DKC are mainly sympathetic. However, the text also reflects that the view of women in general is ambivalent. Women are often alluded to as cunning and fickle-minded, but also as virtuous, devoted, and goodhearted.

²⁰⁷ Kuṭṭanīmatam quoted in Shah, Shalini, “In the Business of Kāma: Prostitution in Classical Sanskrit Literature from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries”, 124.

²⁰⁸ Dhūrtaviṣaṃvāda quoted in Kaul, Shonaleeka, “Woman about Town: An Exploration of the Sanskrit *Kāvya* Tradition”, 69.

With regard to the courtesan, the DKC reveals the same ambiguity. She is depicted as both skilful and worthy of honour, and as cunning, greedy and deceptive. On the whole, the attitudes towards women in the DKC are close to those found in the Kāmasūtra: to serve men is a woman's main object, either in the capacity of a wife or a courtesan. At the same time, the DKC acknowledges a woman's right to take actions to secure her own happiness. It might be added though, that this is acknowledged as long as it does not go contrary to the happiness of the hero.

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Appendix I

The Daśakumāracarita – a summary

This summary will provide a brief presentation of the plot. When making a summary, one has to select from the text what one considers as being the important elements of the story. My selection will necessarily be influenced by my interest in matters relating to women, and by the fact that I am a woman born and raised in the West.

The *pūrvapīṭhikā* (beginning), which contains the first five chapters of the book and the *uttarapīṭhikā*, which is the concluding chapter, are the paraphrased missing sections of Daṇḍin's original work. The central bulk, the *daśakumāracarita*, is Daṇḍin's own work and consists of eight chapters. The original text is taken from M. R. Kale, *Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin: with a commentary*, edited by M.R. Kale, (Bombay: Gopal Narayan & Co., 1925).

Pūrvapīṭhikā, chapter I

King Rājahaṃsa, the mighty and honourable ruler of Puṣpapurī in the land of Magadha, lives happily with his queen Vasumatī.

The king has three hereditary ministers named Dharmapāla, Padmodbhava and Sitavarma, and each of them has sons. Dharmapāla had Sumantra, Sumitra and Kāmapāla; Padmodbhava has Suśruta and Ratnodbhava; and Sitavarma's sons are Sumati and Satyavarman. Kāmapāla (badly behaved and attracted to courtesans), Ratnodbhava (engaged in commerce), and Satyavarman (religiously inclined), all left for foreign countries. The four remaining young men: Sumantra, Sumitra, Suśruta, and Sumati, inherits the posts as ministers when their fathers die.

A war breaks out between Rājahaṃsa and the Mālava king, Mānasāra. Rājahaṃsa is at first victorious, but is later defeated and has to retreat into the Vindhya forest with the women of his harem. Eager for revenge, Rājahaṃsa consults the sage Vāmadeva, who tell him that his kingdom will be restored by his son in the future.

Within a short time his son, named Rājavāhana, is born, and at the same time sons are born to his four ministers. These are named Pramati, Mitragupta, Mantragupta, and Viśruta. While living in the forest, five other boys are on different occasions brought to the king and his queen: two of them are the sons of the king's ally Prahāravarman, the king of Mithilā, and are called Upahāravarman, and Apahāravarman, one is the son of Ratnodbhava, called

Puṣpodbhava, another is the son of Kāmapāla and the *yakṣī*²⁰⁹ Tārāvalī, called Arthapāla, and the fifth boy is the son of Satyavarman, named Somadatta. These five boys had been separated from their parents in dramatic ways. In this way, the ten *Kumārās*²¹⁰ are brought together. They are educated in the necessary arts and sciences and grow up together.

Pūrvapīṭhikā, chapter II

When the princes have grown up and are skilled in all the arts, the sage Vāmadeva advises the king to send the young men out to conquer the world. They journey together deep into the Vindhya forest. There they meet a Brahmin named Mātaṅga who has lived sinfully in the company of savages. The Brahmin, now changed for the better, has been instructed by Śiva to become the overlord of the netherworld Rasātala, and it has been foretold to him that he will meet prince Rājavāhana, who will assist him in his mission. In private, he tells Rājavāhana about the vision he has had, and at midnight they secretly leave for Rasātala, which they reach through a hidden cave.

In Rasātala they are met by Kālindī, the lovely daughter of the ruler of the underworld. Her father has been killed by Viṣṇu, who had been troubled by his power and heroism. The princess has been foretold that she shall marry the Brahmin. With Rājavāhana's consent they marry and the prince ascends to the surface to meet with his friends.

Next morning, unable to find Rājavāhana, the young men set out in search for him. Before they take leave of each other they agree upon a place to meet again.

When Rājavāhana comes back after having assisted the Brahmin, he sees that his friends are gone. He starts his wandering and finally he reaches Ujjain the Vast²¹¹. There, in a pleasure garden, he sees Somadatta together with a beautiful lady and his retinue. Happily reunited with his friend, Rājavāhana urges Somadatta to tell him about his adventures.

Pūrvapīṭhikā, chapter III

On his journey Somadatta meets a brahmin who tells him that king Vīraketu had been forced to give his daughter, Vāmalocanā, in marriage to Mattakāla, king of Laṭā. Vīraketu's minister, Mānapāla, has been appointed to escort the princess to Laṭā, where the wedding is to take

²⁰⁹ A supernatural being

²¹⁰ Young men, princes

²¹¹ Viśala Ujjain is Ujjain the Vast (Onians, p. 582)

place. After Mānapāla unsuccessfully tries to assassinate Mattakāla, they meet in a tumultuous fight. Somadatta, who had met Mānapāla's servants when he was in prison accused of stealing a gemstone, joins the battle and manages to kill Mattakāla.

Full of gratitude, Vīraketu gives his daughter Vāmalocanā to Somadatta in marriage and makes him heir to the throne. Instructed by a *siddha* (a seer) he goes to the temple of Mahākāla where he meets Rājavāhana. When the prince has heard about Somadatta's adventures and has related his own story, he sees Puṣpodbhava approaching. Delighted, Rājavāhana asks him to unfold his tale.

Pūrvapīṭhikā, chapter IV

While resting in the shadow on a hot day, Puṣpodbhava sees a man falling from a steep cliff right above him. He manages to catch the man while still in mid-descent. The man turns out to be his father, Ratnodbhava, who (unable to bear the grief of his lost wife any longer) had tried to commit suicide by throwing himself from a cliff. Shortly after, he also rescues a lady, who grievously wants to end her life by immolating herself in fire. The lady turns out to be his mother, Suvṛttā. In this way he is reunited with his parents.

Puṣpodbhava continues his journey. En route to Ujjayinī, he acquires great wealth due to magical power. In Ujjayinī he makes friends with the merchant Bandhupāla, and fall in love with his daughter Bālachandrikā, who returns his affection. Prince Dāruvarman, a man she detests, is also in love with her and he is determined to have her, if necessary by force.

Puṣpodbhava advises Bālachandrikā to tell everyone that she is being possessed by a *yakṣa* (supernatural being), and that she will marry the man who will free her from the spirit. Tempted by the reward, Dāruvarman tries to conquer the *yakṣa*, but he is killed by Puṣpodbhava disguised as Bālachandrikā's female attendant. Still in disguise, Puṣpodbhava cries out to the crowd outside the house that the *yakṣa* is killing Dāruvarman. In the turmoil that follows, he and Bālachandrikā manage to slip away. A few days later they are married.

On the day predicted by Bandhupāla's omens, Puṣpodbhava goes outside the city where he meets Rājavāhana and Somadatta. Puṣpodbhava renders his story, and after having arranged a future reunion with Somadatta, they bid him goodbye. Puṣpodbhava and Rājavāhana then enter the beautiful city Avantikā, where Rājavāhana is introduced as a Brahmin.

Pūrvapīṭhikā, chapter V

One day while Rājavāhana is staying in Avantikā, he sees the beautiful princess Avantisundarī and her friend Bālachandrikā in the pleasure garden. Avantisundarī is the daughter of king Mānasāra, the old enemy of his father, king Rājahaṃsa. Rājavāhana and Avantisundarī fall in love, and both remember that they had been married to each other in a former life.

In his advancing old age, king Mānasāra has consecrated his son Darpasāra king of Ujjayinī. Darpasāra has then appointed his despotic cousins, Caṇḍavarman and Dāruvarman, to take care of the land, before he goes to do penance at the mountain Kailāsa. Of these two, Dāruvarman had been killed by Puṣpodbhava, which made Caṇḍavarman the sole ruler.

Rājavāhana is in the pleasure garden pondering how to get into the women's harem, when he is approached by a magician, who promises to help him. The magician goes to the king and gets his permission to set up his show. During the show, Rājavāhana and Avantisundarī are legally married, while Caṇḍavarman believes that the marriage is a delusion and part of the show. After the magician has received gifts from the king and has been dismissed, the married couple withdraw into her splendid chamber.

Daśakumāracarita, chapter I

While the newly wedded couple are soundly sleeping, they are suddenly awakened to find that Rājavāhana's feet are chained. Avantisundarī is screaming in fear, and in the turmoil that follows, the harem guards discover the prince and go to report the matter to Caṇḍavarman. Caṇḍavarman is furious, and when he recognises the prince as a friend of Puṣpodbhava, whose wife has brought about his younger brother's death, he wants to execute him immediately. However, the old king Mānasāra and his queen manage to save him from being put to death and instead he is put in a wooden cage and kept imprisoned, while Caṇḍavarman awaits king Darpasāra's final order.

Trusting no one, king Caṇḍavarman carries the imprisoned prince along when he marches out against king Siṃhavarman who has refused Caṇḍavarman's request for his daughter. Caṇḍavarman besieges Caṃpā and captures Siṃhavarman and his daughter Ambālikā, whom he intends to marry the next day.

Then a courier announces that Darpasāra has ordered the execution of Rājavāhana. Caṇḍavarman instructs that as soon as he has married Ambālikā, the prince is to be taken out to be trampled to death by an elephant. In the same instant as the prince is brought in front of

the elephant, the chains fall from his ankles and turns into an *apsaras* (a divine nymph), who has been cursed into that form by a sage.

While Rājavāhana in this way has become free, a cry goes up that Caṇḍavarman has been killed by a thief in the same moment that he stretched out desirously to take the hand of Ambālikā. The thief turns out to be Rājavāhana's friend, Apahāravarman.

Meanwhile, several allies of king Siṃhavarman that have been requested for help by Apahāravarman arrive with their forces. Siṃhavarman and his daughter are thus rescued. Among these allies are all the rest of the prince's companions, and in turn all of them narrate their adventures. Apahāravarman is the first to recount his tale.

Daśakumāracarita, chapter II

While he is wandering in search for Rājavāhana, Apahāravarman seeks out the sage Marīci in hope of finding out where the prince has gone. The sage promises the prince to help him and asks him to stay in the city for a while. He then relates his own story of how he has temporarily lost his powers.

One day, a courtesan named Kāmamañjarī came to the hermitage with tears streaming down her face. Her mother and her relatives came rushing in after her. Kāmamañjarī told Marīci that she wanted to stay in the hermitage to perform religious austerity and find happiness in the next world. Kāmamañjarī's mother appealed to Marīci for help and related to him all she had invested in her daughter to make her a good courtesan. She said that if Kāmamañjarī was to stay in the forest; all her family would starve to death. Kāmamañjarī stayed in the hermitage and little by little Marīci fell in love with her. He turned his back on austerities and started a life as a lover. Then one day Kāmamañjarī took him to town, and on a festival day she brought him to the park where she was greeted by the king and given valuable gifts. After that she dismissed Marīci and told him to return to the forest. She explained to him that she had won a bet with another courtesan on whether she was smart enough to conquer the great Marīci. Marīci was immediately cured of his love and returned to his hermitage. There he took up his austerities to regain his powers again.

After having spent the night at Marīci's hermitage, Apahāravarman proceeds to Campā. On his way he makes friends with Vasupālita, also called Virūpaka because he is so ugly. This man has also fallen victim to Kāmamañjarī, and she has stripped him of all his belongings and left him with nothing. Apahāravarman feels sorry for the man and promises to make Kāmamañjarī return to him all the wealth that she has taken. Apahāravarman enters the

city and takes up the profession of a gambler and a thief. He makes friends with the gambler Vimardaka, who teaches him about the city.

On a dark night he meets Kulapālikā, the daughter of a merchant. She has been promised in marriage to Dhanamitra who, after his parents died, has been so generous that he has turned himself into a poor man. Kulapālikā loves Dhanamitra, but because her father has cancelled the marriage arrangement with Dhanamitra, and wants to give her to the rich Arthapati, she is going to her beloved's house to avoid that marriage. Apahāravarman promises to help her and takes her to Dhanamitra, who is pleased to see his loved one and wants to run away with her. Apahāravarman tells him to wait for a solution. They take the girl home and while there they plunder the house. Then they go to Arthapati's house and rob him as well. This causes the wedding to be postponed.

Apahāravarman circulates a rumour that Dhanamitra has come into possession of a magic leather purse that produces large quantities of gold. Now that Dhanamitra is rich and Arthapati poor, the girl's father gives her in marriage to Dhanamitra.

Apahāravarman sees Rāgamañjarī, Kāmamañjarī's younger sister, and they fall in love. Rāgamañjarī wants to marry and become a housewife instead of following her family's tradition of making a living as a courtesan, but her family refuses. Apahāravarman arranges with Kāmamañjarī that he shall steal the magic purse and give it to her in exchange for Rāgamañjarī. A prerequisite for the purse to yield riches is that she restores the wealth of all whose riches she has tapped. Kāmamañjarī agrees, and in a short while she has restored to Virūpaka everything she has taken. Meanwhile Dhanamitra has reported that the purse is stolen, and Kāmamañjarī is forced to return it to him. On Apahāravarman's advice, she announces that she had received the purse as a gift from Arthapati, and as a consequence he is expelled from the country.

One night Apahāravarman gets drunk and attacks some policemen and is put in prison. His prison guard, Kāntaka, has fallen in love with princess Ambālikā. In order to get into the palace he arranges for Apahāravarman to dig an underground tunnel from the prison to the palace. After completing the job, Apahāravarman kills Kāntaka, and goes into the princess' chamber himself. There he finds the princess asleep and immediately fall in love with her. Apahāravarman returns without waking her.

Then Caṇḍavarman attacks Caṇḍpā and takes the princess and her father captive. Apahāravarman kills Caṇḍavarman while he is in the act of marrying Ambālikā. Soon after,

he is reunited with Rājavāhana as Marīchi had predicted. After Rājavāhana has heard his story, he turns to Upahāvarman and asks him to relate his adventures.

Daśakumāracarita, chapter III

Upahāvarman is wandering until one day he reaches Videha. There he meets an old woman ascetic, who turns out to be his old nurse. The woman relates to him how his father's (Prahāvarman) kingdom had been usurped by Vikāvarman, and how she had tried to escape with the baby prince in her arms and lost him, and how his parents had been taken into captivity. Upahāvarman tells the old nurse that he is determined to resolve the situation, and with the assistance of her daughter he manages to get information about the harem of Vikāvarman. He learns that the beautiful queen, Kalpasundarī, detests her husband because of his bad behaviour towards her. She confides that her parents had promised her to king Prahāvarman's son even before they were born, but as their son was lost, she was married to Vikāvarman.

Upahāvarman manages to get the queen to fall in love with him, and she arranges to meet him in the garden. Upahāvarman's heart is pained by the fact that he is going to violate another man's wife. However, as the law books permitted such an offence if it is done for the sake of *artha* (wealth) and *kāma* (love), he goes to the garden where he makes love to Kalpasundarī. He also instructs her in how to persuade Vikāvarman to undertake a performance of a magical rite that will exchange his ugly and deformed body for a beautiful one. Vikāvarman falls into the trap, and is killed by Upahāvarman.

Upahāvarman then usurps the throne pretending to be the transformed Vikāvarman, and he succeeds in deluding everyone. With the knowledge he has gained by secretly listening to Vikāvarman's confessions of his misdeeds to his wife, a prerequisite for the transformation, he reverses all of Vikāvarman's sinful deeds, and thus convinces the ministers that his appearance and morals has changed.

Then he released his parents, and made his father the king. Thereafter he goes out with his army to assist his ally Siṃhavarman. In Caṃpā he is reunited with Rājavāhana, who commands Arthapāla to tell his story.

Daśakumāracarita, chapter IV

Arthapāla had been wandering in search for Rājavāhana until one day he reaches Kāśī. There he sees a man in great distress, and Arthapāla asks him the cause of this suffering. The man

tells him how he had come to know Kāmapāla, the chief minister of Kāśī. The man relates that Kāmapāla had once fallen in love with Kāntimatī, the daughter of king Chaṇḍasiṃha. He had secretly stayed in the ladies' apartment, where Kāntimatī had become pregnant and had given birth to a son. Her attendants had been frightened, and they had taken the baby away while they told Kāntimatī that the boy was stillborn. Later Kāmapāla was appointed minister of the old king Chaṇḍasiṃha, and he was given Kāntimatī in marriage. Living with his wives he enjoyed life like a crown prince until the old king died. One day his wife Tārāvalī walked out on him in anger, because he had called her by Kāntimatī's name when they were intimate. The new king Siṃhaghoṣa, who was an evil-minded youth, was encouraged by the fact that Kāmapāla no longer was protected by his *yakṣī* wife. He dismissed Kāmapāla and sentenced him to death.

Arthapāla recognises Kāmapāla to be his father, husband of the *yakṣī* girl Tārāvalī, who long ago had handed Arthapāla over to queen Vasumatī. On hearing the fate of his father, he becomes determined to release him. He catches a poisonous snake, and hides in a tree near the place where his father is to be executed. He then drops the snake on his father's head so that it bites him and his father falls down, unconscious. With anti-poison charms, Arthapāla halts the effect of the poison. After having removed the apparently dead body of his father with the king's permission, he restores him to life. Arthapāla's mother, Kāntimatī, is happy to be reunited with her son.

They now make a plan to overthrow king Siṃhaghoṣa, and Arthapāla digs a tunnel to the royal palace. The tunnel comes out in a magnificent underground palace filled with many ladies, among them the beautiful princess Maṇikarṇikā, who has been placed there to protect her from public view. An old nurse informs Arthapāla that his mother Kāntimatī had won the princess in game of dice when she was still in the womb, as a future wife for her son. Arthapāla promises to marry Maṇikarṇikā and then enters the royal palace through a narrow passage. There he finds the king asleep. Arthapāla takes him captive and brings him to his father, who places him under confinement. The kingdom thus becomes under Kāmapāla and Arthapāla's control.

Arthapāla marries Maṇikarṇikā and goes out to assist Siṃhavarman, the king of the Aṅgas. In Campā he meets Rājavāhana, who is pleased to hear about Arthapāla's heroic deeds. Rājavāhana then commands his friend Pramati to relate his story.

Daśakumāracarita, chapter V

When Pramati is wandering the quarters in search for Rājavāhana, he comes to a forest on the Vindhya Mountains, where he goes to rest under a large tree. Before he falls asleep, he prays to the guardian deity of the place for protection. While he is sleeping he has a sensation of being transported to a palace where he finds himself lying on a bed beside a beautiful lady. He immediately falls in love with her.

When he wakes up he is wondering whether it was a dream or a trick. Then a *yakṣī* appears in front of him, who bears the signs of being a woman separated from her husband. She tells him that it was all real, and that she had carried him asleep to the chamber of princess Navamālikā. She also tells him that she is Tārāvalī, the wife of Kāmapāla. She has been cursed for a year to feel the pain of separation from her home, because she had left her husband in anger. Then she takes her leave and goes back to Kāmapāla.

Pramati then proceeds to Śrāvastī. On the road he makes friends with a Brahmin at a cockfight, who promises to help him if needed. When he reaches Śrāvastī, a girl approaches him, who turns out to be a companion of princess Navamālikā. From her he learns that the princess has fallen in love with him while he was sleeping beside her in her bed. Pramati informs her that he will think of a way that he safely can get into the harem.

He goes back to the Brahmin, and together they work out a plan. The Brahmin takes Pramati, dressed as a girl, to the king and asks him to look after his “daughter” until he returns with the man whom she has been promised to marry. Meanwhile Pramati stays in the ladies’ quarter together with Navamālikā.

One day, according to the plan, Pramati slips away and joins the Brahmin, who awaits him with a man’s clothes. The Brahmin then goes with Pramati to the king and demands to see his daughter. Of course, the king is unable to find her and the Brahmin threatens to immolate himself on a pyre. The king is forced to give Pramati his own daughter as a substitute for the girl who has disappeared.

In this way Pramati is married to the princess and he soon wins the king’s confidence. While he is leading his troops to assist king Siṃhavarman, he meets his friend Rājavāhana. The prince praises Pramati’s deeds, and he then turns to Mitragupta to hear his story.

Daśakumāracarita, chapter VI

Mitragupta has journeyed to the Suhma country in his search for Rājavāhana. In the capital Dāmalīpta he meets a young man, Kośadāsa, who tells him that the childless king of Suhma

had prayed to the goddess Vindhyavāsinī for two children. The goddess granted him a son, who was named Bhīmadhanvan, and a daughter, named Kandukāvātī. She told the king that his son would become subordinate to the husband of his daughter, and that the girl, from her seventh birthday should worship the goddess Somāpīḍā with a ball performance every year in order to get a virtuous husband, whom she should choose. The young man confesses that he is in love with the princess' foster sister, the courtesan Chandrasenā, who is forcibly held by the king's son Bhīmadhanvan.

Just then the Kanduka festival starts and Chandrasenā announces that her master's daughter has arrived at the park. Mitragupta immediately falls in love with her. When the ball dance is over Kandukāvātī signals that she too has fallen in love with him. Then she leaves for the palace.

Next day the king's son, who has been informed about his sister's choice of husband and who detests the thought of being made subordinate to a stranger, has Mitragupta seized, chained, and thrown into the sea. Luckily he is picked up by a passing vessel, but he is kept in chains. Just then the ship is attacked by another vessel, and Mitragupta is released to help them fight the enemy. When the attackers are defeated, he is treated with respect and wins his freedom. The captain on the other ship turns out to be Bhīmadhanvan. Lashed together, the two ships drift far away by unfavourable winds, until they cast anchor by an island and Mitragupta lands ashore.

On the island he meets a *rākṣasa* (demon) who threatens to eat him unless he answers four questions: What is cruel? What is dear and beneficial to a householder? What is desire? , What is the means to achieve a difficult goal? Mitragupta's answers to these questions are respectively: the hearth of a woman, the virtues of a housewife, imagination, and, wisdom. He exemplifies his answers by telling the stories of: Dhūminī, a wife who tried to kill her husband after having forced herself on a crippled man; Gominī, a woman with all the good qualities of a *pativrata* (devoted and virtuous wife); Nimbavatī, a wife who had been rejected by her husband, but who managed to win him back by pretending to be someone else; and Nitambavatī, a childless *kulastrī* (high-born lady) who was tricked, by a man who desired her, to leave her home and later became expelled by her husband. The *rākṣasa* is pleased with the answers.

Just then another *rākṣasa* came dragging a woman through the air. She is rescued and turns out to be princess Kandukāvātī. They board the ship and set sail for Dāmaliptā. When they land they hear that the king and the queen are desolate at the loss of their children, and

are determined to starve themselves to death. Mitragupta relates what has happened, and the delighted king makes him his son-in-law and his own son Mitragupta's subordinate. The latter commands Bhīmadhanvan to give up Chandrasenā, who becomes Kośadāsa's wife.

The king is an ally of Siṃhavarman, so Mitragupta is dispatched to his aid with an army. In Cāmpā he meets Rājavāhana, who are delighted to hear Mitragupta's story. He then urges Mantragupta to relate his adventures.

Daśakumāracarita, chapter VII

Because Mantragupta's lips are sore from excessive kissing, he relates his story without using any labial letters.

Mantragupta has gone to the country of Kāliṅga in search for Rājavāhana. One night, when he has rested near a funeral-ground, he is alarmed by a cry. A sorcerer is in the process of sacrificing princess Kanakalekhā, king Kardana's daughter, to his deity. Mantragupta manages to kill the sorcerer and rescues the princess, with whom he immediately falls in love. The princess signals with glances and otherwise, that she also has fallen in love with him. Mantragupta accompanies her to the palace where he secretly stays in her apartment.

One day king Kardana decides to spend some days with his family by the sea. There he is suddenly attacked by Jayasiṃha, king of Āṇḍhra, and the king and his family are taken captive. Mantragupta is told that Jayasiṃha has spared Kardana's life since his daughter Kanakalekhā has kindled his desire. He is further told that Kanakalekhā has become possessed by a *yakṣa*, which has to be expelled before Jayasiṃha can marry the girl.

Mantragupta disguises himself as an ascetic and goes to the king to offer him assistance in driving away the *yakṣa*. The king is delighted and ready to follow the ascetic's advises. The plan is to get the king to bathe in a lake, where he will be transformed by virtue of Mantragupta's magical spell. His new looks will enable him to defeat the *yakṣa*. In agreement with the plan, Jayasiṃha dives into the lake where he is killed by Mantragupta. Mantragupta then arises from the water as the transformed king. He then releases king Kardana and his daughter, and is formally given princess Kanakalekhā's hand in marriage.

With the large forces of the Āṇḍhra and the Kāliṅga countries he goes to aid Siṃhavarman. There he is reunited with his friend Rājavāhana, who marvels at his wisdom and courage. The prince then turns to Viśruta to hear his story.

Daśakumāracarita, chapter VIII

Viśruta is wandering around in the Vindhyan forest in search for Rājavāhana, when he comes upon a young boy attended by an old man. The boy is Bhāskaravarman, the young prince of Vidarbha. His father, king Anantavarman, had been misled by vicious company, and had neglected the affairs of the state. Being more and more indulgent in pleasures, he was attacked one day by Vasantabhāhu, a neighbouring prince. Anantavarman was killed, and Vasantabhāhu usurped the throne.

Anantavarman's old minister took the young prince Bhāskaravarman, his elder sister Mañjuvādhinī, and their mother, queen Vasuṃdharā, and they escaped together with a few hereditary ministers. They took the queen and her children to her husband's half-brother, Mitavarman, who made advances to her. When she spurned him, he made plans to kill the prince. Alarmed, the queen sent her son away with an attendant, with instructions to bring the boy to a safe place.

While listening to the old man's story, Viśruta realises that the young prince is related to him and he promises to recover his lost kingdom. From a forester he learns that a marriage is being arranged between Pracaṇḍavarman, the younger brother of king Caṇḍavarman, and Mañjuvādhinī. Viśruta sends the old man back to the queen, telling her to tell everyone that her son had been eaten by a tiger. He also instructs the man to bring the queen some strong poison in which to dunk her garland. She shall then strike it in the face of Mitavarman declaring that this harmless object will strike him as a sword to prove that she is a *pativratā*. She shall then plunge the garland in an antidote provided by Viśruta and pass it on to her daughter.

It all went according to the plan. Mitavarman dies, and the people are amazed by the power of the *pativratā*. Shortly after, Viśruta and the young prince arrive, both attired as ascetics. During a performance, he manages to kill Pracaṇḍavarman, and in the middle of the night he and the prince proceed to the temple of Durgā. There they conceal themselves underneath the base of the idol.

The next day, as instructed, the queen arrives together with a group of people to worship the goddess. She has in advance announced that she has been told in a vision that the boy will be returned to her alive on a particular day. Suddenly Viśruta and the prince reveal themselves before the eyes of everyone. Viśruta announces that the prince is under the protection of the goddess, and that she has sent him back to be their lawful ruler.

In this way Bhāskaravarman is recognised as the king and Viśruta as his guardian. Viśruta then marries Mañjuvādhinī and conducts the affairs of the kingdom for the young boy.

Uttarapīṭhikā

Viśruta sets out to defeat Vasantabhānu, Lord of Aśmaka, and restores to Bhāskaravarman his position as overlord of Vidarbha. He leads an army to attack Vasantabhānu, and manages to kill him in a single combat, and thereby secures Bhāskaravarman's succession to the throne. He is just preparing to go out in search of Rājavāhana when he is summoned to aid Siṃhavarman. There he meets Rājavāhana.

When all the men are assembled and are exchanging stories with one another, some of king Rājahaṃsa's men arrive from Puṣpapurī. They are bringing a letter from the king saying that the king and the queen had been struck with grief when they heard of the sudden disappearance of the prince and the dispersal of the young men. They had, however, been consoled by the sage Vāmadeva who foretold that all the men would return safely home after sixteen years. That period has now elapsed, and the sage has told the king that the men now are assembled at Caṃpā. The king wants them to immediately return to Puṣpapurī to see him. The men, accompanied with their wives and a small army, set out for Puṣpapurī. On the way they defeat their old enemy Mānasāra and take possession of the land. They release Puṣpodbhava from captivity and take Avantisundarī with them. Then they all go to pay their respect to Rājavāhana's father and mother. After having distributed the various kingdoms among the ten men, the king and his wife retire from public life. Rājavāhana and his nine friends rule their respective kingdoms with justice and enjoy their abundant kingly pleasures.

Appendix II

Sentences for analysis (in chronological order)

- 1 *svarlokaśikharoruruciraratnaratnākaravelāmekhalāvalayitadharaṇīramaṇīsaubhāgya
bhogabhāgyavān*
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. I, line 4, p. 2)

His (the king's) was the good fortune to enjoy the beautiful young woman in the form of the earth, with the girdle in the form of the border of the ocean, which contains gems as large and beautiful as those on the peak of mount Meru.

- 2 *tasya vasumatī nāma sumātī līlāvatīkulaśekharamaṇī ramaṇī babhūva*
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. I, line 8, p. 2)

His queen was Vasumati, "The wealthy one" or "The Earth," wise and the crest jewel of the whole class of graceful women.

- 3 *vīraketurapi bhīto mahadupāyanamiva tanayām mattakālāyādāt*
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. III, line 12, p. 30)

Vīraketu was thus frightened into giving his daughter to Mattakāla as if she was a great gift.

- 4 *taruṇīlābhahr̥ṣṭacetā lāṭapatiḥ*
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. III, line 13, p. 30)

The Lāṭa king delighted at heart by the acquisition of the young woman.

- 5 *(Mānapāla) nijanāthāvamānakhinnamānaso'ntar bibheda*
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. III, line 2, p. 31)

(Mānapāla) was pained at heart by the humiliation of his master.

- 6 *saṃtuṣṭamanā rājā ... nijatanayāṃ mahyam adāt*
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. III, lines 10-11, p. 33)

Highly pleased, the king ... gave me his own daughter in marriage.

- 7 *manasā'bhimukhaiśca samākuñcitai rāgalajjāntarālavartibhir-*
apāṅgavartibhirīkṣaṇaviśeṣairnijamanovṛttimakathayat
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. IV, line 16, p. 37 and line 1, p. 38)

With meaningful glances from the outer corner of her eyes, directed to me and darting between passion and bashfulness, she silently conveyed her thoughts.

- 8 *caturagūḍhaceṣṭābhīrasyā manonurāgaṃ*
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. IV, line 2, p. 38)

(Having clearly perceived) her love (for me) from her clever covert gestures ...

- 9 *tasyāḥ saśaṃbhramapremalajjākautukamanoraṃ līlāvilokanasukhamanubhavan*
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. IV, line 7, p. 38)

It was a pleasure to watch her lovely looks, all the more entrancing because of its confusion of love, bashfulness and curiosity.

- 10 *kanyādūṣaṇadoṣaṃ dūrīkṛtya balātkāreṇa rantumudyuṅkte*
(*pūrvapīṭhikā*, chap. IV, lines 2-3, p. 39)

Regardless of the crime of corrupting a virgin, he is resolved to enjoy me by force.

- 11 *tamekadā kāmamañjarī nāmāṅgapurīvataṃsasthānīyā vārayuvatir ... sanirvedam
abhyetya ...*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 7, p. 65)

One day a young courtesan called Kāmamañjarī (bouquet of love), the ornament of the Aṅga-capital, approached him.

- 12 *bhagavan, asyā me doṣameṣā vo dāsī vijñāpayati doṣaśca mama
svādhikārānuṣṭāpanam*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 1-2, p. 66)

Your holiness, your humble slave is bringing before you my offence against her (my daughter, Kāmamañjarī); my fault lies in making her perform the duties of her proper profession.

- 13 *eṣa hi gaṇikāmāturadhikāro yad ...*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 2-3, p. 66)

This is the duty of the mother of a courtesan: ...

- 14 *gaṇikāyāśca gamyaṃ prati sajjataiva na saṅgaḥ satyāmapī prītau na māturmātṛkāyā
vā śāsanātivṛttiḥ*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 2-4, p. 68)

A courtesan's duty is readiness towards her customer and not attachment to him. Even if there is love, she must not disobey her mother or grandmother.

- 15 *evaṃ sthite'nayā prajāpativihitaṃ svadharmamullaṅghya*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 4, p. 68)

Such was the settled practice, but she (my daughter) violated her own duty ordained by Prajāpati.

- 16 *svakuṭumbakaṃ cāvasāditam*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 7, p. 68)

(She has) ruined her own household.

- 17 *sā cediya mahāryaniścayā srava eṣa jano'traivānanyagatiranaśanena saṃsthāsyata*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 8-9, p. 68)

If she (my daughter) proves unshaken in her resolve (to stay in the forest), then all these people, who have no other means of subsistence, will starve themselves to death, right here.

- 18 *dvitīyastu sarvasyaiva sulabhaḥ kuladharmānuṣṭhāyinaḥ*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 12, p. 68)

(And) the second (the attainment of heaven) is easy to obtain for anyone by simply fulfilling the duties of your family.

- 19 *niśamyaitanniyatibalānnu tatpāṭavānnu svabuddhimāndyānnu svaniyamamanāḍṛtya*
tasyāmasau prāsajāt
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 8-9, p. 71)

Whether owing to the power of destiny, or to her eloquence, or to the infirmity of his own mind, hearing this (Kāmamañjarī's praising words of *kāma*) he (Marīci) became attached to her and disregarded his own vows.

- 20 *hr̥ṣṭena ca rājñā mahārhai ratnālaṃkārairmahatā ca paribarheṇānugṛhya viśṛṣṭā*
vāramukhyābhiḥ pauramukhyaiśca gaṇaśaḥ praśasyamānā
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 5-7, p. 72)

She (Kāmamañjarī) was sent away by the happy king who had favoured her with jewelled ornaments of great value and a large retinue, and also applauded by crowds of prominent courtesans and principal citizens.

- 21 *svaśaktiniṣikṭaṃ rāgam uddhṛtya tayaiva bandhakyā mahadvairāgyamarpitam*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 16, p. 72 and line 1 p. 73)

And this whore, after she had removed the passion instilled in me by her power, has now given me absolute dispassion.

- 22 *navapurvasu vā puṃstvamūlan api tu prakṛṣṭagaṇikāprārthyayauvano hi yaḥ sa pumān*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 7-8, p. 74)

Neither form nor wealth is the test of manliness, but he alone is a man whose youth would be desired by the most superior courtesan.

- 23 *ato yuvatilālāmbhūtā kāmamañjarī yaṃ vā kāmāyate sa haratu subhagapatākām*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 8-9, p. 74)

Let him, whom Kāmamañjarī, the jewel among young women, chooses for her love have the banner of good fortune.

- 24 *subhagaṃmanyena ca mayāsvadhanasya svagr̥hasya svagaṇasya svadehasya svajīvitasyaca saiveśvarīkṛtā kṛtaścāhamanayā malamallakaśeṣaḥ*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 13-14, p. 74)

Imagining myself lucky, I made her mistress of my wealth, my home, my people, my body, and my very life. All she left me was my loincloth.

- 25 *kiṃ tu sā kila vārakanyakā gaṇikāsvadharmapratīpagāminā bhadrodāreṇāśāyena samagirata*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 13, p. 84 and lines 1-2, p. 85)

However, rumour has it that the courtesan maiden, with noble and generous thought that goes contrary to the proper duties of a courtesan, has declared:

- 26 *guṇaśulkā 'ham na dhanaśulkā na ca pāṇigrahaṇādrte 'nyabhogyam yauvanam*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 2-3, p. 85)

My bride-price will be counted in virtues, not riches; and my youth will not be enjoyed by another except by marriage.

- 27 *yadiyamatikramya svakuladharmamarthanirapekṣā guṇebhya eva svaṃ yauvanam*
vicikrīṣate
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 6-7, p. 85)

She had so transgressed the duties of her family that she, quite regardless of wealth, wishes to sell her own youth for merits only.

- 28 *kulastrīvr̥ttamevācyutamanutiṣṭāsati*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, line 8, p. 85)

Absolutely firm, she only wants to become a respectable housewife.

- 29 *kāmamañjaryapi katipayairevāhobhiraśṣmantakaśeṣamajinaratnadohāśayā*
svamabhyudayamakarot
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 9-10, p. 87)

Within a few days, Kāmamañjarī also reduced her large fortune to the ashes of a hearth, in anticipation of milking the precious bag.

- 30 *deva yeyam gaṇikā kāmamañjarī lobhotkarṣāllobhamañjarīti...*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 11-12, p. 87)

Your Majesty, the courtesan Kāmamañjarī, because of her excessive greed, has been nicknamed Lobhamañjarī (Bouquet of greed)...

- 31 *naiṣa nyāyo veśakulasya yaddāturapadeśaḥ | na hyarthairnyāyārjitaireva puruṣā
veśamupatiṣṭhanti*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 12-13, p. 88)

It is improper for prostitutes to expose their patrons. After all, not every man who frequents prostitutes does so with honestly acquired money.

- 32 *tasyaivadravyāṇāṃ tu kenacidavayavena sā varākī kāmamañjarī
carmaratnamṛgaṭṭṣṇikāpavidddhasarvasvā sānukampaṃ dhanmitrābhinoditena
bhupenānvagrhyata*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 5-7, p. 89)

Unlucky Kāmamañjarī had given away everything she owned for the mirage of the precious bag. But prompted by Dhanamitra, the king took pity on her and granted her a portion of his (Arthapati's) property.

- 33 *prasṭataram ca sakhyam mayā saha dhanamitrasya matparigrahatvam ca
rāgamañjaryāḥ*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. II, lines 9-10, p. 90)

My friendship with Dhanamitra is well-known, and so are also my acceptance of Rāgamañjarī in marriage. (Spoken by Apahāravarman.)

- 34 *striyaścopdhīnāmudbhavakṣetram*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, line 16 p. 105 and line 1 p. 106)

And women are the source of deceptions.

- 35 *nātirocate ma eṣa bhartā viśeṣataścaiṣu vāsareṣu*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, line 11, p. 109)

I do not like my husband much, and least of all these days.

- 36 *tatkimityapekṣyate*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, line 3, p. 110)

Why should then respect be shown to him (by me)?

- 37 *aviśahyaṃ hi yoṣitāmananḡaśaraniṣanḡbhūtacetasāmaniṣṭajanasaṃvāsayantraṇā-
duḥkham*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, lines 4-5, p. 110)

The misery of being forced to share her life with a man she detests can hardly be borne by a woman whose mind has become the quiver of *Ananḡa*'s²¹² arrows. (Spoken by Kalpasundarī.)

- 38 *ato 'munāpuruṣena māmadyodyānamādhavīgrhe samāgamaya*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, lines 5-6, p. 110)

Do therefore arrange for me to meet with this man today in the *Mādhavī* pavilion in the garden. (Spoken by Kalpasundarī)

- 39 *asti cāyamartharāśīḥ*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. III, line 7, p. 110)

I have a great wealth. (Spoken by queen Kalpasundarī)

²¹² Name of Kāma (god of love, so called because he was made bodiless by a flash from the eye of Śiva for having attempted to disturb his life of austerity by filling him with love for Pārvatī), Monier-Williams, Monier, *A Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, (Dehli: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1997), 24.

- 40 *strīdharmascaiṣa yadaduṣṭasya duṣṭasya vā bharturgatirgantavyā | tadahamamunaiva saha citāgnimāroḥṣyāmi.*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. IV, lines 1-2, p. 131)

Also, it is the duty of a wife to share the destiny of her husband, whether he is good or wicked. Therefore I shall mount the funeral pyre beside my husband. (Spoken by Kāntimatī)

- 41 *asya tu paṇigrāhakasya gatimananuprapadyamānā bhavatkulaṃ kalaṅkayeyam*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. IV, line 13, p. 132)

But if I do not share the fate of him who took my hand in marriage, I would be disgracing your family. (Spoken by Kāntimatī)

- 42 *tvadambayā kāntimatyā ceyaṃ garbhasthaiva dyūtajitā svamātrā tavaiva jāyātvena samakalpyata*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. IV, lines 5-7, p. 136)

But her own mother pledged her as a wife for you, being won by your mother Kāntimatī in gambling (with her mother), even while she was still in the womb.

- 43 *durabhirakṣatayā tu duhitṛṇāṃ muktaśaiśavānāṃ viśeṣataścāmātrkāṇām*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. V, lines 14-15, p. 146)

It is difficult to control daughters who have passed childhood, and especially those that have no mother.

- 44 *yaṃ cābhilaṣetsā 'muṣmai deyā*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 13, p. 149)

Let her be given over (in marriage) to whomsoever she desires.

- 45 *tasyāstu sakhī candrasenā nāma dhātreyikā mama priyā 'sīt*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 16-17, p. 149)

Her (princess Kandukāvati's) friend and foster sister Chandrasenā, was my beloved.

- 46 *dviṣadbhiḥ prakhyāpito 'si tasmimstvayyuparate yadyahaṃ jīveyaṃ nṛśaṃso veśa*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 12-13, p. 150)

If I were to live after you were dead, I would be confirming the saying that a prostitute is fatal to men.

- 47 *sāyaṃ copasṛtya candrasenā rahasi*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 13, p. 153)

In the evening Chandrasenā approached us in secret.

- 48 *so 'yamartho viditabhāvayā mayā svamātre tayā ca tanmātre mahiṣyā ca*
manujendrāya nivedayiṣyate
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 5-6, p. 154)

This situation will be reported by me, who know her feelings, to my mother, by her to her (princess Kandukāvati's) mother, and by the queen to the king.

- 49 *kiṃ krūraṃ strīhṛdayaṃ*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 16, p. 156)

What is cruel? The heart of a woman.

- 50 *kiṃ gṛhiṇaḥ priyahitāya dāraguṇāḥ*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 16, p. 156)

What is dear and beneficial for a householder? The virtues of a housewife.

- 51 *bhartsitā'pi tena balātkāramarīramat*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 3, p. 158)

Although he repulsed her, she forcefully had her way (took her pleasure with him).

- 52 *taṃ ca vikalaṃ skandhenoduhya deśāddeśāntaraṃ paribhramantī pativratāpratītiṃ*
lebhe bahuvidhāśca pūjāḥ
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 6-7, p. 158)

Then carrying the cripple on her shoulders and wandering from place to place, she (Dhūminī) acquired a reputation as a *pativratā* (devoted and virtuous wife) and was worshipped in many ways.

- 53 *nāstyadārāṇāmananugūṇadārāṇāṃ vā sukhaṃ nāma*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 3-4, p. 159)

There is no happiness for those who have no wife, or for those who have no wife of corresponding qualities.

- 54 *āsajjati ca me hṛdayamasyāmeva tatparīkṣyaināmudaheyam*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 1, p. 161)

My heart is set on this girl (Gominī) already, so putting her to the test, I will marry her.

- 55 *nītvaitadanapekṣaḥ kāmapi gaṇikāmarodhamakarot | tāmapiyasau*
priyasakhīmivopācarat
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 10-12, p. 163)

After he had taken her home he neglected her and attached himself to a courtesan. She (Gominī) even treated this woman as a dear friend.

- 56 *patiṃ ca daivatamiva muktatandrā paryacarat | gṛhakāryāṇī cāhīnamanvatiṣṭat*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 12-13, p. 163)

She (Gominī) persistently worshipped her husband as a god, and performed her household duties without fail.

- 57 *daurbhāgyaṃ nāma jīvanmaraṇamevāṅganānām, viśeṣataścakulavadhūnām*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 13-14, p. 164)

The unhappiness of being hated by one's husband is simply a living death for any woman, and even more of a woman of high birth.

- 58 *bhagavati patireva daivataṃ vanitānām, viśeṣataśca kulajānām | atastacchuśrūṣaṇ-*
ābhyupāyahetubhūtaṃ kiṃcidācaraṇīyam
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 4-5, p. 165)

Revered lady, a woman's husband is her deity, and how much more for those of high birth. Hence something must be done to enable me to serve him again.

- 59 *tatra kaścītkulaputraḥ kalāsu gaṇikāsu cātiraktaḥ*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 2-3, p. 167)

There lived a son of good family addicted to the fine arts and to courtesans.

- 60 *bhadra viruddhamivaitatpratibhāti | yataḥ kulajādurlabhaṃ vapuḥ ābhijātyaśaṃsinī*
ca namratā
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 7-8, p. 167)

Good man, this seems to be a contradiction. For her (Nitambavatī's) physical beauty is rare among women of good family, and yet there is a modesty which proclaims high birth.

- 61 *śramaṇikāmukhācca duṣkaraśilabhraṃśāṃ kulastriyamupaplabhya...*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 3-4, p. 168)

The Buddhist nun explained that it is very difficult to make a woman of good family fall from her character...

- 62 *...kim itarananārīsulabhaṃ cāpalaṃ sprṣṭaṃ na veti parīkṣā kṛtā*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, lines 7-8, p. 168)

...testing you to find out whether or not you too are afflicted by the fickleness so common among other women. (said to Nitambavatī)

- 63 *vimarśe ca tasyāḥ sākinītvamaikamatyena pauraṇāmabhimatamāsīt | bhartrā ca parityaktā...tena dhūrtena...agrhyata*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VI, line 20 p. 169 and line 1-2, p. 170)

After deliberation, the citizens agreed unanimously that she (Nitambavatī) was a witch. Abandoned by her husband...she was seized by the cunning man.

- 64 *raktatarā hi nastatra sakhyaśceṭyaśca | yathā na kaścidetajjñāsyati tathā yaṭiṣyante ' itī*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VII, lines 10-12, p. 175)

For there (in the ladies' quarter) my friends are totally attached to me. They will endeavour so that no one shall know about this (that the prince shall dwell in the ladies' quarter). Spoken by princess Kanakalekhā.

- 65 *aho mātmyam pativrātānām*
(*daśakumāracarita*, chap. VIII, line 10, p. 204)

Oh, the great power of the *pativrātās* (chaste and virtuous wives)!